JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Mahatma Gandhi

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JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

MAHATMA GANDHI

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TAMIL NAD GRAMA SEVAK VIDYALAYAM
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Foreword

How can a book tell us about him and his strange and wonderful personality that has gripped the millions of India? How can we find out from the printed page wherein lies that elusive and rarest of qualities which makes a man tower above his fellows and leaves its impress on the ages to come? This little man has been and is a colossus before whom others, big in their own way and in their own space and time, are small of stature. In this world of hatred and uttermost violence and the atom bomb, this man of peace and goodwill stands out, a contrast and a challenge. In an acquisitive society madly searching for new gadgets and new luxuries, he takes to his loincloth and his mud hut. In man's race for wealth and authority and power, he seems to be a nonstarter, looking the other way; and yet that authority looks out of his gentle but hard eyes, that power seems to fill his slight and emaciated frame, and flows out to others. Wherein does his strength lie, wherein this power and authority? Has he drunk somewhere from the secret spring of life which has given strength to India through the ages? . . .

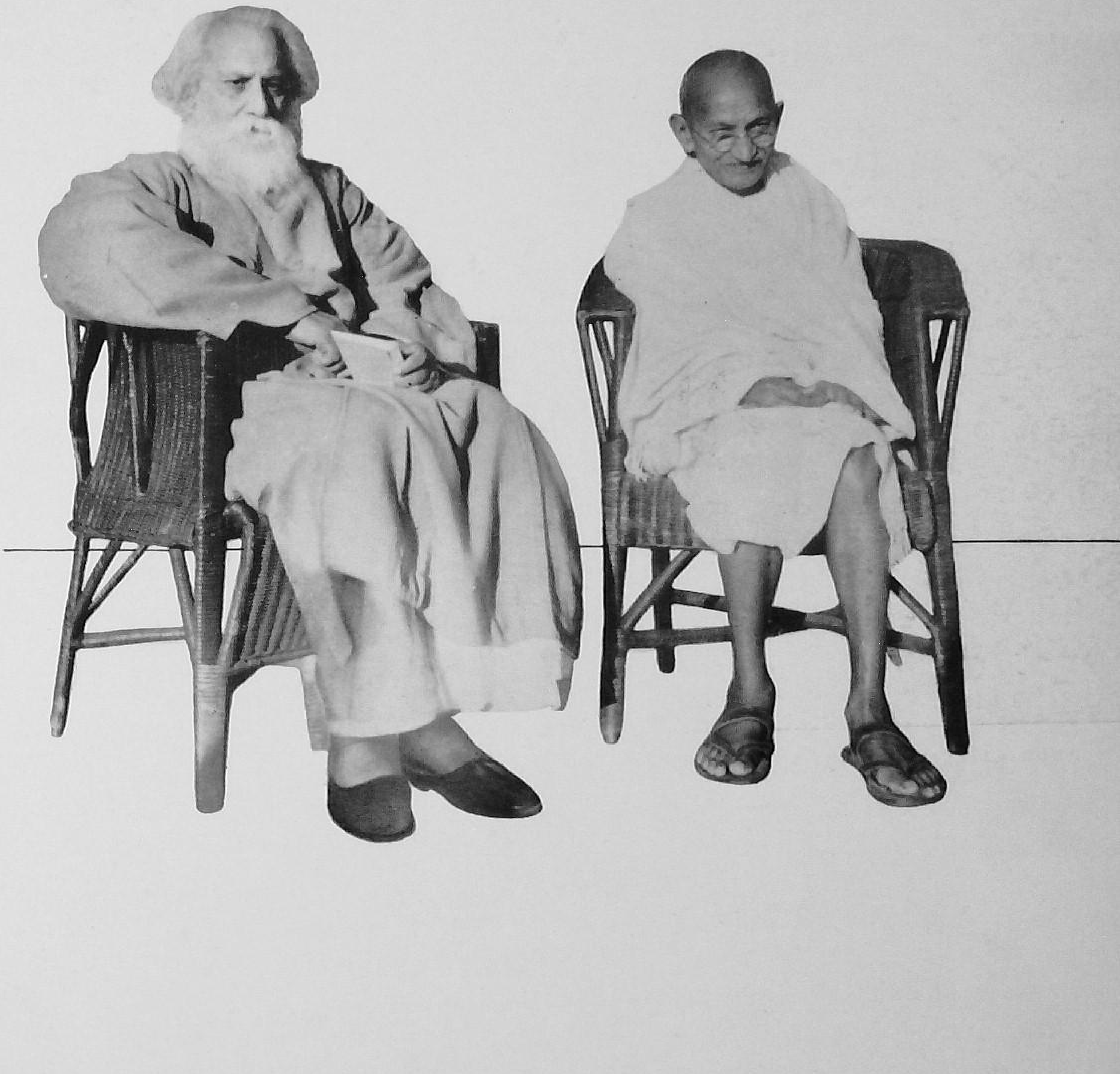
We who have known him for these many years in all his moods and activities and tried to fathom what lay behind them, what distant

horizon held his eyes, are still far from the end of our search. As ever he eludes us, though outwardly none can be more obvious than he is. Often we do not understand him ; we argue with him and get angry sometimes. But the anger passes leaving us rather ashamed of our lack of balance and restraint. Only that pervasive influence remains and he seems to become the vehicle and embodiment of some greater force of which even he is perhaps only dimly conscious. Is that the spirit of India, the accumulated experience of the millennia that lie behind our race, the memory of a thousand tortured lives?

While we have laboured and grown older, a new generation has grown up, also under his spell, but differently. For already to most of them he is a legend, a faraway mysterious figure, whom they have not seen or heard. They have not come into that intimate contact with him and seen him work those miracles on Indian humanity which we saw a quarter of a century ago. They take these changes for granted, and Gandhiji's greatness also for granted.

How will later generations think of him or feel about him? I do not know. But I do know that his name and the stories that will cling to him will inspire our people for long ages to come. The truth is wonderful enough, but inevitably it will be embroidered and added to till something emerges which we would hardly recognize.[1]

PHOTO : HINDUSTHAN STANDARD →



Tagore and Gandhi...

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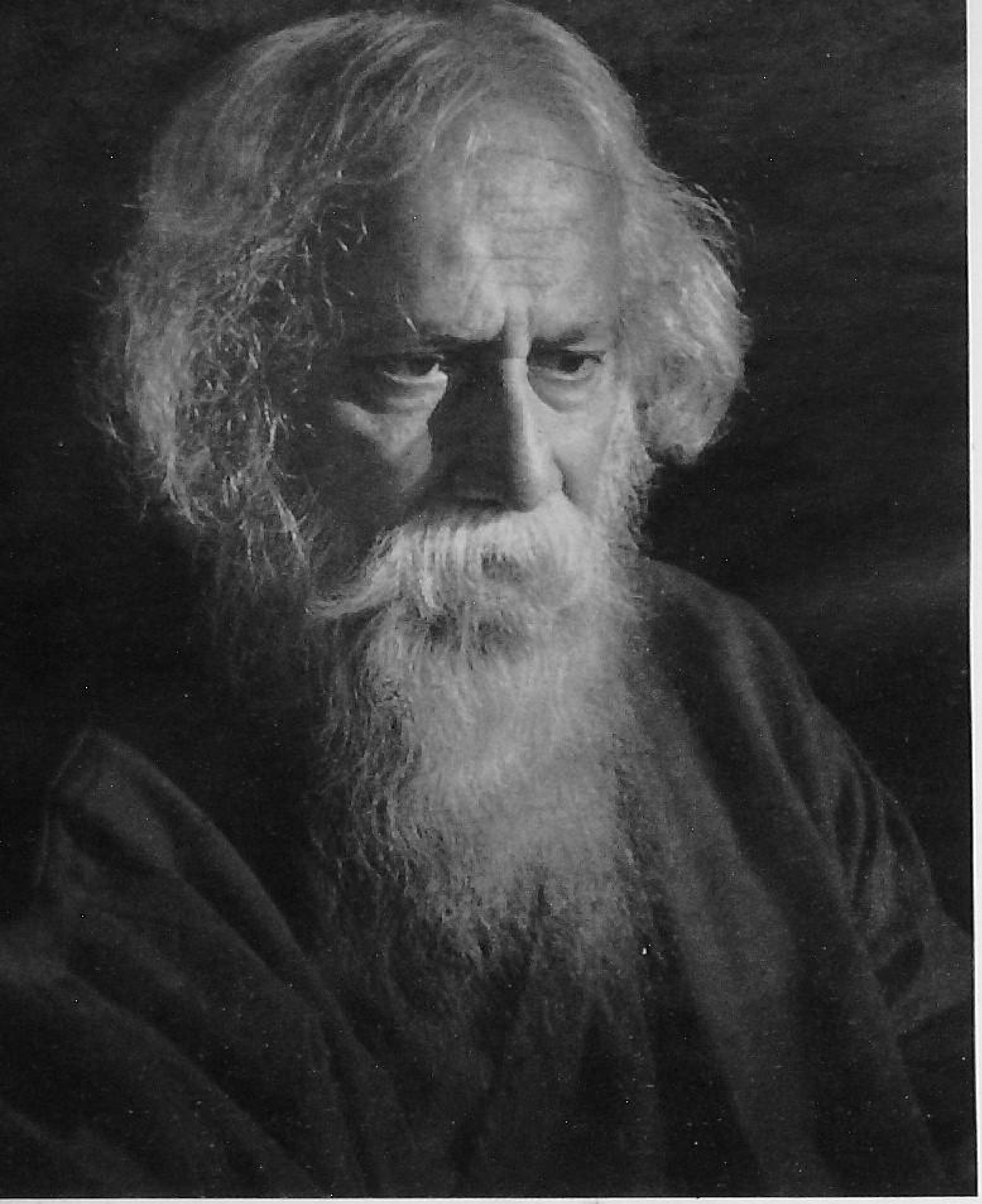


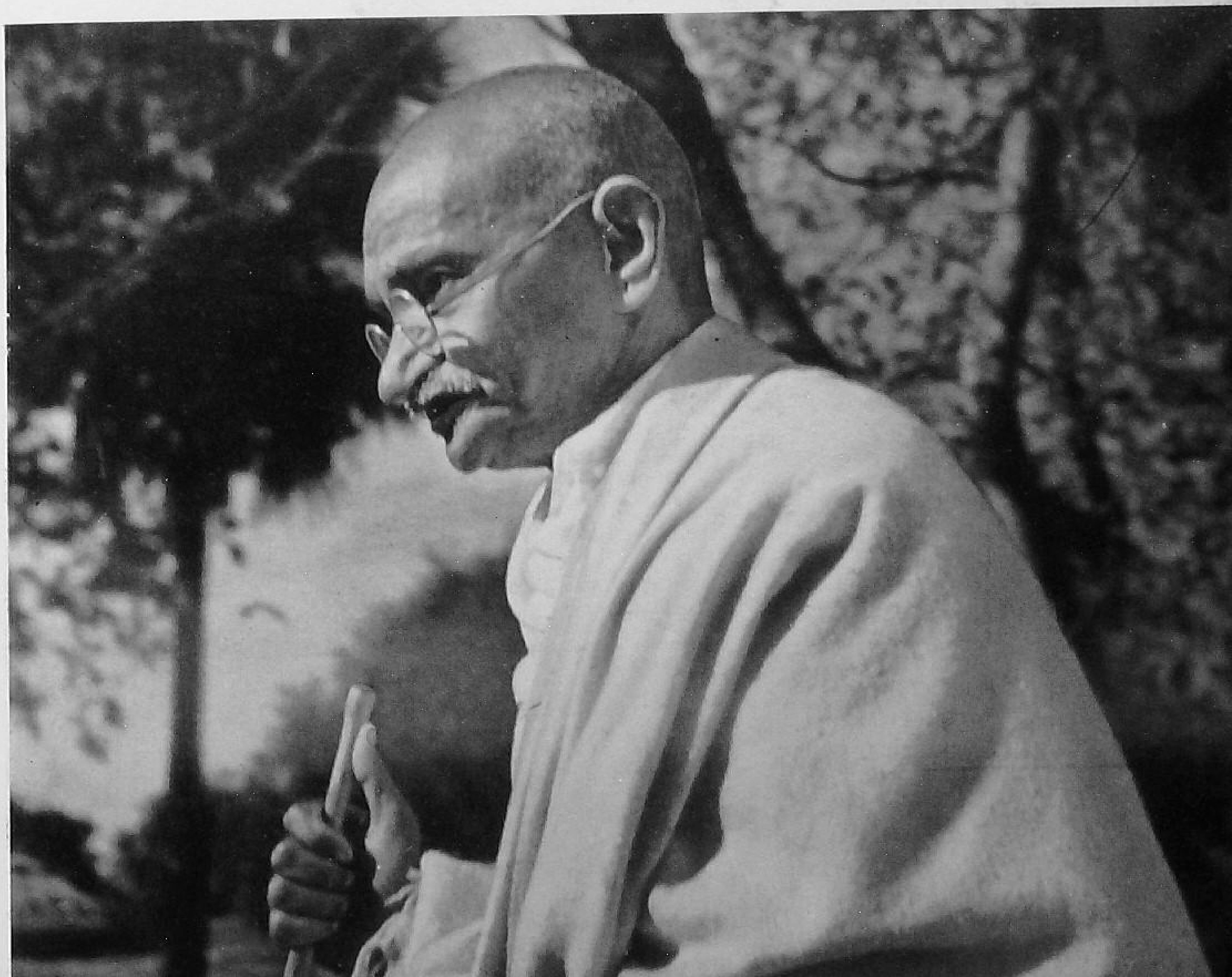
PHOTO : SAMBHU SAHA

TAGORE and GANDHI have undoubtedly been the two outstanding and dominating figures of India in this first half of the twentieth century. It is instructive to compare and contrast them. No two persons could be so different from one another in their make-up or temperaments. Tagore, the aristocratic artist, turned democrat with proletarian sympathies, represented essentially the cultural tradition of India, the tradition of accepting life in the fullness thereof and going

through it with song and dance. Gandhi, more a man of the people, almost the embodiment of the Indian peasant, represented the other ancient tradition of India, that of renunciation and asceticism. And yet Tagore was primarily the man of thought, Gandhi of concentrated and ceaseless activity. Both, in their different ways, had a world outlook, and both were at the same time wholly India. They seemed to represent different but harmonious aspects of India and to complement one another.

—*The Discovery of India*

PHOTO : SAMBHU SAHA



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1

A Young Barrister in South Africa

While India was politically dormant in the prewar years [before 1914], a far country saw a gallant and unique struggle for India's honour. This was South Africa, where large numbers of Indian labourers and some merchants had emigrated. They were humiliated and ill-treated in a host of ways, for racial arrogance reigned supreme there. It so happened that a young Indian barrister was taken to South Africa to appear in a law case. He saw the condition of his fellow countrymen, and he was humiliated and distressed by it. He resolved to do his best to help them. For many years he laboured quietly, giving up his profession and his belongings and devoting himself entirely to the cause he had espoused.

This man was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Today every child in India knows him and loves him, but then he was little known outside South Africa. Suddenly his name flashed across to India, and people talked of him and of his brave fight with surprise and admiration and pride. The South African government had tried to humiliate the Indian residents there still more, and under Gandhiji's leadership they had refused to submit. This was strange enough, that a community of poor, downtrodden, ignorant workers and a group of petty

merchants, far from their home country, should take up this brave attitude.

What was stranger still was the method they had adopted, for as a political weapon this was a novel one in the world's history. We have heard of it often enough since. It was Gandhiji's *satyagraha*, which means holding on to truth. It is sometimes called passive resistance, but that is not a correct translation, for it is active enough. It is not non-resistance merely, though *ahimsa* or non-violence is an essential part of it. Gandhiji startled India and South Africa with this non-violent warfare, and people in India learned with a thrill of pride and joy of the thousands of our countrymen and women who went willingly to jail in South Africa. In our hearts we were ashamed of our subjection and our impotence in our own country, and this instance of a brave challenge on behalf of our own people increased our own self-respect. Suddenly India became politically awake on this issue, and money poured into South Africa. The fight was stopped when Gandhiji and the South African government came to terms.[2]

First Meeting

My first meeting with Gandhiji was about the time of the Lucknow Congress during Christmas 1916. All of us admired him for his heroic fight in South Africa, but he seemed very distant and different and unpolitical to many of us young men. He refused to take part in Congress or national politics then and confined himself to the South African Indian question. Soon afterward his adventures and victory in Champaran, on behalf of the tenants of the planters, filled us with enthusiasm. We saw that he was prepared to apply his methods in India also, and they promised success.[3]

India waited after the war ; resentful, rather aggressive, not very hopeful, but still expectant. Within a few months, the first fruits of the new British policy, so eagerly waited for, appeared in the shape of a proposal to pass special laws to control the revolutionary movement. Instead of more freedom, there was to be more repression. These bills were based on the report of a committee and were known as the Rowlatt Bills. But very soon they were called the "Black Bills" all over the country, and were denounced everywhere and by every Indian, including even the most moderate. They gave great powers to the government and the police to arrest, keep in prison without trial, or to have a secret trial of any person they disapproved of or suspected. A famous description of these bills at the time was: *na vakil, na appeal, na dalil.* As the outcry against the bills gained volume, a new factor appeared, a little cloud on the political horizon which grew and spread rapidly till it covered the Indian sky.

This new factor was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He had returned to India from South Africa during wartime and settled down with his colony in an ashrama in Sabarmati. He had kept away from politics. He had even helped the government in recruiting men for the war. He was, of course, very well known in India since his *Satyagraha* struggle in South Africa. In 1917 he had championed with success the miserable downtrodden tenants of the European planters in the Champaran district of Bihar. Later he had stood up for the peasantry of Kaira in Gujrat. Early in 1919 he was very ill. He had barely recovered when the Rowlatt Bill agitation filled the country. He also joined his voice to the universal outcry.

But this voice was somehow different from the others. It was quiet and low, and yet it could be heard above the shouting of the multitude ; it was soft and gentle, and yet there seemed to be steel hidden away somewhere in it ; it was courteous and full of appeal, and yet there was something grim and frightening in it ; every word used was full of meaning and seemed to carry a deadly earnestness. Behind the language of peace and friendship there was power and the quivering shadow of action and a determination not to submit to a wrong. We are familiar with that voice now ; we have heard it often enough during the last fourteen years. But it was new to us in February and March 1919 ; we did not quite know what to make of it, but we were thrilled. This was something very different from our noisy politics of condemnation and nothing else, long speeches always ending in the same futile and ineffective resolutions of protest which nobody took very seriously. This was the politics of action, not of talk. . . .[4]

The Satyagraha Movement

Gandhiji had passed through a serious illness early in 1919. Almost from his sick bed he begged the Viceroy not to give his consent to the Rowlatt Bills. That appeal was ignored as others had been and then, almost against his will, Gandhiji took the leadership in his first all-India agitation. He started the Satyagraha Sabha, the members of which were pledged to disobey the Rowlatt Act, if it was applied to them, as well as other objectionable laws to be specified from time to time. In other words they were to court gaol openly and deliberately.

When I first read about this proposal in the newspapers my reaction was one of tremendous relief. Here at last was a way out of the

tangle, a method of action which was straight and open and possibly effective. I was afire with enthusiasm and wanted to join the Satyagraha Sabha immediately. I hardly thought of the consequences—law-breaking, gaol-going, etc.—and if I thought of them I did not care. But suddenly my ardour was damped and I realized that all was not plain sailing. My father was dead against this new idea. He was not in the habit of being swept away by new proposals ; he thought carefully of the consequences before he took any fresh step. And the more he thought of the Satyagraha Sabha and its programme, the less he liked it. What good would the gaol-going of a number of individuals do, what pressure could it bring on the Government? Apart from these general considerations, what really moved him was the personal issue. It seemed to him preposterous that I should go to prison. The trek to prison had not then begun and the idea was most repulsive. Father was intensely attached to his children. He was not showy in his affection, but behind his restraint there was a great love.

For many days there was this mental conflict, and because both of us felt that big issues were at stake involving a complete upsetting of our lives, we tried hard to be as considerate to each other as possible. I wanted to lessen his obvious suffering if I could, but I had no doubt in my mind that I had to go the way of Satyagraha. Both of us had a distressing time, and night after night I wandered about alone, tortured in mind and trying to grope my way out. Father—I discovered later—actually tried sleeping on the floor to find out what it was like, as he thought that this would be my lot in prison.

Gandhiji came to Allahabad at father's request and they had long talks at which I was not present. As a result Gandhiji advised me not to precipitate matters or to do anything which might upset

father. I was not happy at this, but other events took place in India which changed the whole situation, and the Satyagraha Sabha stopped its activities.

Satyagraha Day—all-India *hartals* and complete suspension of business—firing by the police and military at Delhi and Amritsar, and the killing of many people—mob violence in Amritsar and Ahmedabad—the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh—the long horror and terrible indignity of martial law in the Punjab. The Punjab was isolated, cut off from the rest of India ; a thick veil seemed to cover it and hide it from outside eyes. There was hardly any news, and people could not go there or come out from there.

Odd individuals, who managed to escape from that inferno, were so terror-struck that they could give no clear account. Helplessly and impotently, we, who were outside, waited for scraps of news and bitterness filled our hearts. Some of us wanted to go openly to the affected parts of the Punjab and defy the martial law regulations. But we were kept back, and meanwhile a big organization for relief and enquiry was set up on behalf of the Congress.

As soon as martial law was withdrawn from the principal areas and outsiders were allowed to come in, prominent Congressmen and others poured into the Punjab offering their services for relief or enquiry work. The relief work was largely directed by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Swami Shraddhananda ; the enquiry part was mainly under the direction of my father and Mr. C. R. Das, with Gandhiji taking a great deal of interest in it and often being consulted by the others. Deshbandhu Das especially took the Amritsar area under his charge and I was deputed to accompany him there and assist him in any way he desired. That was the first occasion I had

of working with him and under him and I valued that experience very much and my admiration for him grew. Most of the evidence relating to Jallianwala Bagh and that terrible lane where human beings were made to crawl on their bellies, that subsequently appeared in the Congress Inquiry Report, was taken down in our presence. We paid numerous visits to the so-called Bagh itself and examined every bit of it carefully. . .

During the Punjab inquiry I saw a great deal of Gandhiji. Very often his proposals seemed novel to our committee and it did not approve of them. But almost always he argued his way to their acceptance and subsequent events showed the wisdom of his advice. Faith in his political insight grew in me. . .

The First Gandhi Congress

The Amritsar Congress was the first Gandhi Congress. Lokamanya Tilak was also present and took a prominent part in the deliberations, but there could be no doubt about it that the majority of the delegates, and even more so the great crowds outside, looked to Gandhiji for leadership. The slogan *Mahatma Gandhi ki jai* began to dominate the Indian political horizon. The Ali Brothers, recently discharged from internment, immediately joined the Congress, and the national movement began to take a new shape and develop a new orientation.

M. Mohammad Ali went off soon on a Khilafat deputation to Europe. In India the Khilafat Committee came more and more under Gandhiji's influence and began to flirt with his ideas of non-violent non-co-operation. I remember one of the earliest meetings of the Khilafat leaders and Moulvies and Ulemas in Delhi in January 1920. A Khilafat deputation was going to wait on the Viceroy, and Gandhiji

was to join it. Before he reached Delhi, however, a draft of the proposed address was, according to custom, sent to the Viceroy. When Gandhiji arrived and read this draft, he strongly disapproved of it and even said that he could not be a party to the deputation, if this draft was not materially altered. His objection was that the draft was vague and wordy and there was no clear indication in it of the absolute minimum demands which the Muslims must have. He said that this was not fair to the Viceroy and the British Government, or to the people, or to themselves. They must not make exaggerated demands which they were not going to press, but should state the minimum clearly and without possibility of doubt, and stand by it to the death. If they were serious, this was the only right and honourable course to adopt.

This argument was a novel one in political or other circles in India. We were used to vague exaggerations and flowery language and always there was an idea of a bargain in our minds. Gandhiji, however, carried his point and he wrote to the Private Secretary of the Viceroy, pointing out the defects and vagueness of the draft address sent, and forwarding a few additional paragraphs to be added to it. These paragraphs gave the minimum demands. The Viceroy's reply was interesting. He refused to accept the new paragraphs and said that the previous draft was, in his opinion, quite proper. Gandhiji felt that this correspondence had made his own position and that of the Khilafat Committee clear, and so he joined the deputation after all.

It was obvious that the Government were not going to accept the demands of the Khilafat Committee and a struggle was therefore bound to come. There were long talks with the Moulvies and the

Ulemas, and non-violence and non-co-operation were discussed, especially non-violence. Gandhiji told them that he was theirs to command, but on the definite understanding that they accepted non-violence with all its implications. There was to be no weakening on that, no temporizing, no mental reservations. It was not easy for the Moulvies to grasp this idea but they agreed, making it clear that they did so as a policy only and not as a creed, for their religion did not prohibit the use of violence in a righteous cause.

Gandhiji and the Khilafat Movement

The political and the Khilafat movements developed side by side during that year 1920, both going in the same direction and eventually joining hands with the adoption by the Congress of Gandhiji's non-violent non-co-operation. The Khilafat Committee adopted this programme first, and August 1st was fixed for the commencement of the campaign.

Earlier in the year a Muslim meeting (I think it was the Council of the Moslem League) was held in Allahabad to consider this programme. The meeting took place in Syed Raza Ali's house. M. Mohammad Ali was still in Europe but M. Shaukat Ali was present. I remember that meeting because it thoroughly disappointed me. Shaukat Ali was, of course, full of enthusiasm but almost all the others looked thoroughly unhappy and uncomfortable. They did not have the courage to disagree and yet they obviously had no intention of doing anything rash. Were these the people to lead a revolutionary movement, I thought, and to challenge the British Empire? Gandhiji addressed them and after hearing him they looked even more frightened than before. He spoke well in his best dictatorial vein. He was

humble but also clear-cut and hard as a diamond, pleasant and soft-spoken but inflexible and terribly earnest. His eyes were mild and deep, yet out of them blazed out a fierce energy and determination. This is going to be a great struggle, he said, with a very powerful adversary. If you want to take it up, you must be prepared to lose everything, and you must subject yourself to the strictest non-violence and discipline. When war is declared martial law prevails, and in our non-violent struggle there will also have to be dictatorship and martial law on our side, if we are to win. You have every right to kick me out, to demand my head, or to punish me whenever and howsoever you choose. But so long as you choose to keep me as your leader you must accept my conditions, you must accept dictatorship and the discipline of martial law. But that dictatorship will always be subject to your goodwill and to your acceptance and to your co-operation. The moment you have had enough of me, throw me out, trample upon me, and I shall not complain.

Something to this effect he said and these military analogies and the unyielding earnestness of the man made the flesh of most of his hearers creep. But Shaukat Ali was there to keep the waverers up to the mark, and when the time for voting came the great majority of them quietly and shamefacedly voted for the proposition, that is for war!

As we were coming home from the meeting I asked Gandhiji if this was the way to start a great struggle. I had expected enthusiasm, spirited language and a flashing of eyes ; instead we saw a very tame gathering of timid, middle-aged folk. And yet these people, such was the pressure of mass opinion, voted for the struggle. Of course, very few of these members of the Moslem League joined the struggle later.

Many of them found a safe sanctuary in Government jobs. The Moslem League did not represent, then or later, any considerable section of Moslem opinion. It was the Khilafat Committee of 1920 that was a powerful and far more representative body, and it was this Committee that entered upon the struggle with enthusiasm. . .[5]

Congress Takes the Plunge

The next year the Congress took the plunge, and adopted Gandhiji's programme of non-co-operation. A special session in Calcutta adopted this, and later the annual session in Nagpur confirmed it. The method of struggle was a perfectly peaceful one, non-violent as it was called, and its basis was a refusal to help the government in its administration and exploitation of India. To begin with there were to be a number of boycotts—of titles given by the foreign government, of official functions and the like, of law courts by both lawyers and litigants, of official schools and colleges, and of the new councils under the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms. Later the boycotts were to extend to the civil and military services and the payment of taxes. On the constructive side stress was laid on hand spinning and the *khaddar,* and on arbitration courts to take the place of the law courts. Two other important planks were Hindu-Moslem unity and the removal of untouchability among the Hindus.

The Congress also changed its constitution and became a body capable of action, and at the same time it laid itself out for a mass membership.

Now, this programme was a totally different thing from what the Congress had so far been doing; indeed, it was quite a novel thing in the world, for the *Satyagraha* in South Africa had been very limited

in its scope. It meant immediate and heavy sacrifices for some people, like the lawyers, who were called upon to give up their practices, and the students, who were asked to boycott the government colleges. It was difficult to judge it, as there were no standards of comparison. It is not surprising that the old and experienced Congress leaders hesitated and were filled with doubt. The greatest of them, Lokamanya Tilak, had died a little before this. Of the other prominent Congress leaders only one, Motilal Nehru, supported Gandhiji in the early stages. But there was no doubting the temper of the average Congressman, or the man in the street, or the masses. Gandhiji carried them off their feet, almost hypnotized them, and with loud shouts of *Mahatma Gandhi ki jai*, they showed their approval of the new gospel of non-violent non-co-operation. The Moslems were as enthusiastic about it as the others. Indeed, the Khilafat Committee, under the leadership of the Ali Brothers, had adopted the programme even before the Congress did so. Soon the mass enthusiasm and the early successes of the movement brought most of the old Congress leaders into it. . . .

The Growth of Nationalism

The growth of nationalism turned people's minds to the necessity for political freedom. Freedom was necessary not only because it was degrading to be dependent and enslaved, not only because, as Tilak had put it, it was our birthright and we must have it, but also to lessen the burden of poverty from our people. How was freedom to be obtained? Obviously, we were not going to get it by remaining quiet and waiting for it. It was equally clear that methods of mere protest and begging, which the Congress had so far followed with more or less vehemence, were not only undignified for a people, but were also

futile and ineffective. Never in history had such methods succeeded or induced a ruling or privileged class to part with power. History, indeed, showed us that peoples and classes who were enslaved had won their freedom through violent rebellion and insurrection.

Armed rebellion seemed out of the question for the Indian people. We were disarmed, and most of us did not even know the use of arms. Besides, in a contest of violence, the organized power of the British government, or any state, was far greater than anything that could be raised against it. Armies might mutiny, but unarmed people could not rebel and face armed forces. Individual terrorism, on the other hand, the killing by bomb or pistol of individual officers, was a bankrupt's creed. It was demoralizing for the people, and it was ridiculous to think that it could shake a powerfully organized government, however much it might frighten individuals. . . .

So all these avenues led nowhere, and there seemed to be no way out of the intolerable conditions of a degrading servitude. People who were at all sensitive felt terribly depressed and helpless. This was the moment when Gandhiji put forward his programme of non-co-operation. Like Sinn Fein in Ireland, it taught us to rely on ourselves and build up our own strength, and it was obviously a very effective method of bringing pressure on the government. The government rested very largely on the co-operation, willing or unwilling, of Indians themselves, and if this co-operation were withdrawn and the boycotts practised, it was quite possible, in theory, to bring down the whole structure of government.

Even if the non-co-operation did not go so far, there was no doubt that it could exert tremendous pressure on the government, and at the same time increase the strength of the people. It was to be perfectly

landlord's agent; fear of the moneylender; fear of unemployment and starvation, which were always on the threshold. It was against this all-pervading fear that Gandhiji's quiet and determined voice was raised: Be not afraid.

Was it so simple as all that? Not quite. And yet fear builds its phantoms which are more fearsome than reality itself, and reality when calmly analyzed and its consequences willingly accepted loses much of its terror.

So, suddenly as it were, that black pall of fear was lifted from the people's shoulders, not wholly, of course, but to an amazing degree. As fear is close companion to falsehood, so truth follows fearlessness. The Indian people did not become much more truthful than they were, nor did they change their essential nature overnight; nevertheless a sea change was visible as the need for falsehood and furtive behaviour lessened. It was a psychological change, almost as if some expert in psychoanalytical method had probed deep into the patient's past, found out the origins of his complexes, exposed them to his view, and thus rid him of that burden.

There was that psychological reaction also, a feeling of shame at our long submission to an alien rule that had degraded and humiliated us, and a desire to submit no longer, whatever the consequences might be. We did not grow much more truthful, perhaps, than we had been previously, but Gandhiji was always there as a symbol of uncompromising truth to pull us up and shame us into truth.

Gandhiji and Truth

What is truth? I do not know for certain, and perhaps our truths are relative and absolute truth is beyond us. Different persons may

and do take different views of truth, and each individual is powerfully influenced by his own background, training, and impulses. So also Gandhiji. But truth is at least for an individual what he himself feels and knows to be true. According to that definition I do not know of any person who holds to the truth as Gandhiji does. That is a dangerous quality in a politician, for he speaks out his mind and even lets the public see its changing phases.

Gandhiji influenced millions of people in India in varying degrees ; some changed the whole texture of their lives, others were only partly affected, or the effect wore off, and yet not quite, for some part of it could not be wholly shaken off. Different people reacted differently, and each will give his own answer to this question. Some might well say almost in the words of Alcibiades:

"Besides, when we listen to any one else talking, however eloquent he is, we don't really care a damn what he says ; but when we listen to you, or to some one else repeating what you've said, even if he puts it ever so badly, and never mind whether the person who is listening is man, woman, or child, we're absolutely staggered and bewitched. And speaking for myself, gentlemen, if I wasn't afraid you'd tell me I was completely bottled, I'd swear on oath what an extraordinary effect his words have had on me—and still do, if it comes to that. For the moment I hear him speak I am smitten by a kind of sacred rage, worse than any Corybant, and my heart jumps into my mouth and the tears start into my eyes—Oh, and not only me, but lots of other men.

"Yes, I have heard Pericles and all the other great orators, and very eloquent I thought they were ; but they never affected me like that ; they never turned my whole soul upside down and left me

feeling as if I were the lowest of the low ; but this latter day Maryas, here, has often left me in such a state of mind that I've felt I simply couldn't go on living the way I did. . . .

"And there is one thing I've never felt with anybody else—not the kind of thing you would expect to find in me, either—and that is a sense of shame. Socrates is the only man in the world that can make me feel ashamed. Because there's no getting away from it, I know I ought to do the things he tells me to ; and yet the moment I'm out of his sight I don't care what I do to keep in with the mob. So I dash off like a runaway slave, and keep out of his way as long as I can: and then next time I meet him I remember all that I had to admit the time before, and naturally I feel ashamed. . . .

"Only I've been bitten by something much more poisonous than a snake ; in fact, mine is the most painful kind of bite there is. I've been bitten in the heart, or the mind, or whatever you like to call it."

Gandhiji Makes Congress a Mass Organization

Gandhiji for the first time entered the Congress organization and immediately brought about a complete change in its constitution. He made it democratic and a mass organization. Democratic it had been previously also, but it had so far been limited in franchise and restricted to the upper classes. Now the peasants rolled in, and in its new garb it began to assume the look of a vast agrarian organization with a strong sprinkling of the middle classes. This agrarian character was to grow. Industrial workers also came in, but as individuals and not in their separate, organized capacity.

Action was to be the basis and objective of this organization, action based on peaceful methods. Thus far the alternatives had been:

just talking and passing resolutions, or terroristic activity. Both of these were set aside, and terrorism was especially condemned as opposed to the basic policy of the Congress. A new technique of action was evolved which, though perfectly peaceful, yet involved non-submission to what was considered wrong, and as a consequence, a willing acceptance of the pain and suffering involved in this. Gandhiji was an odd kind of pacifist, for he was an activist full of dynamic energy. There was no submission in him to fate or anything that he considered evil; he was full of resistance, though this was peaceful and courteous.

The call of action was twofold. There was of course the action involved in challenging and resisting foreign rules ; there was also the action which led us to fight our own social evils. Apart from the fundamental objective of the Congress—the freedom of India—and the method of peaceful action, the principal planks of the Congress were national unity, which involved the solution of the minority problems, and the raising of the depressed classes and the ending of the curse of untouchability.

The New Ideology

Realizing that the main props of British rule were fear, prestige, the co-operation, willing or unwilling, of the people, and certain classes whose vested interests were centred in British rule, Gandhiji attacked these foundations. Titles were to be given up, and though the title-holders responded to this only in small measure, the popular respect for these British-given titles disappeared and they became symbols of degradation. New standards and values were set up, and the pomp and splendour of the viceregal court and the princes, which used to

impress so much, suddenly appeared supremely ridiculous and vulgar and rather shameful, surrounded as they were by the poverty and misery of the people. Rich men were not so anxious to flaunt their riches ; outwardly at least many of them adopted simpler ways, and in their dress became almost indistinguishable from humbler folk.

The older leaders of the Congress, nurtured in a different and more quiescent tradition, did not take easily to these new ways and were disturbed by the upsurge of the masses. Yet so powerful was the wave of feeling and sentiment that swept through the country that some of that intoxication filled them also. A very few fell away, and among them was Mr. M. A. Jinnah. He left the Congress not because of any difference of opinion on the Hindu-Moslem question but because he could not adapt himself to the new and more advanced ideology, and even more because he disliked the crowds of ill-dressed people, talking in Hindustani, who filled the Congress. His idea of politics was of a superior variety, more suited to the legislative chamber or to a committee room. For some years he felt completely out of the picture and even decided to leave India for good. He settled down in England and spent several years there.

It is said, and I think with truth, that the Indian habit of mind is essentially one of quietism. Perhaps old races develop that attitude to life ; a long tradition of philosophy also leads to it. And yet Gandhiji, a typical product of India, represents the very antithesis of quietism. He has been a demon of energy and action, a hustler, and a man who not only drives himself but drives others. He has done more than anyone I know to fight and change the pietism of the Indian people.

He sent us to the villages, and the countryside hummed with the

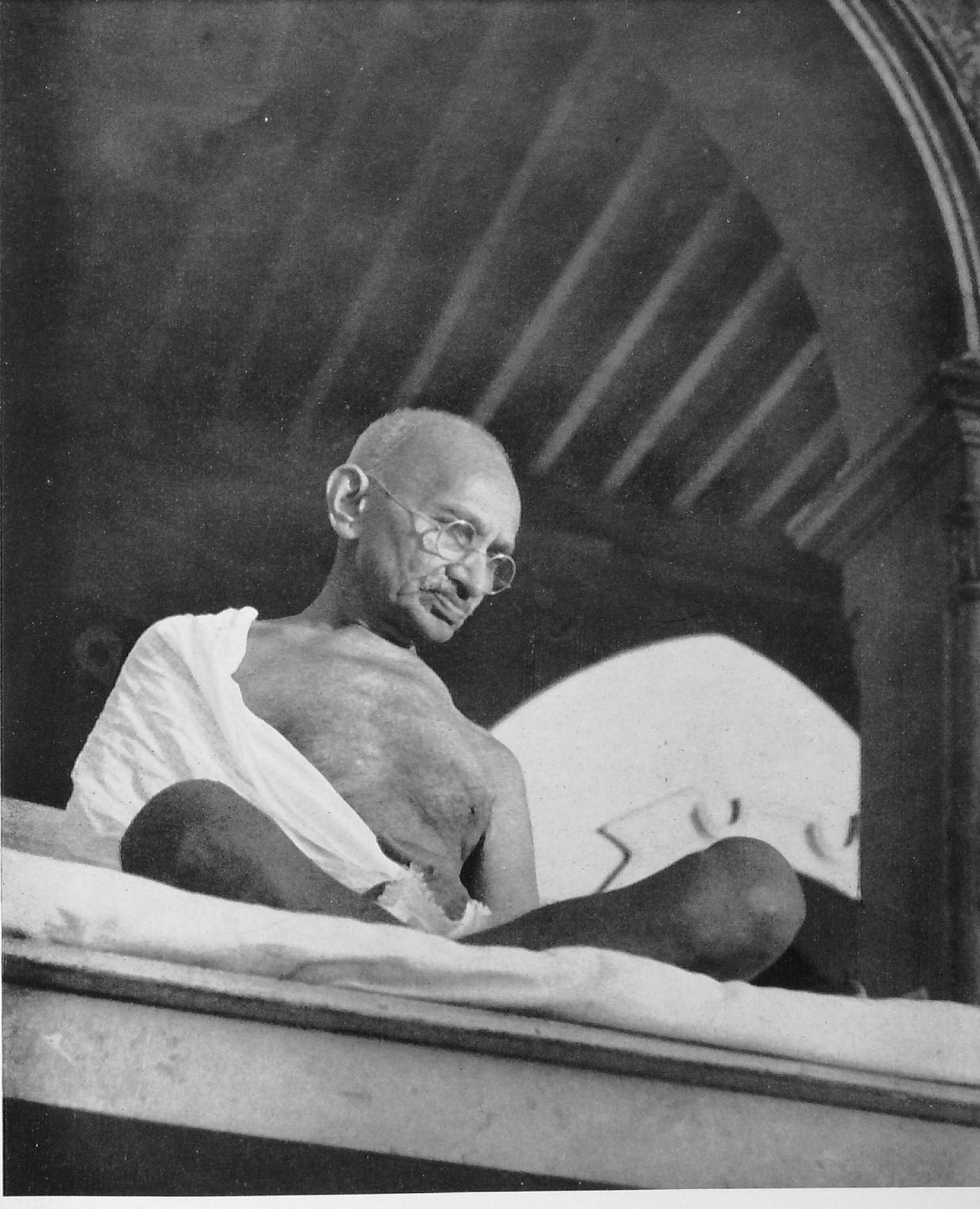
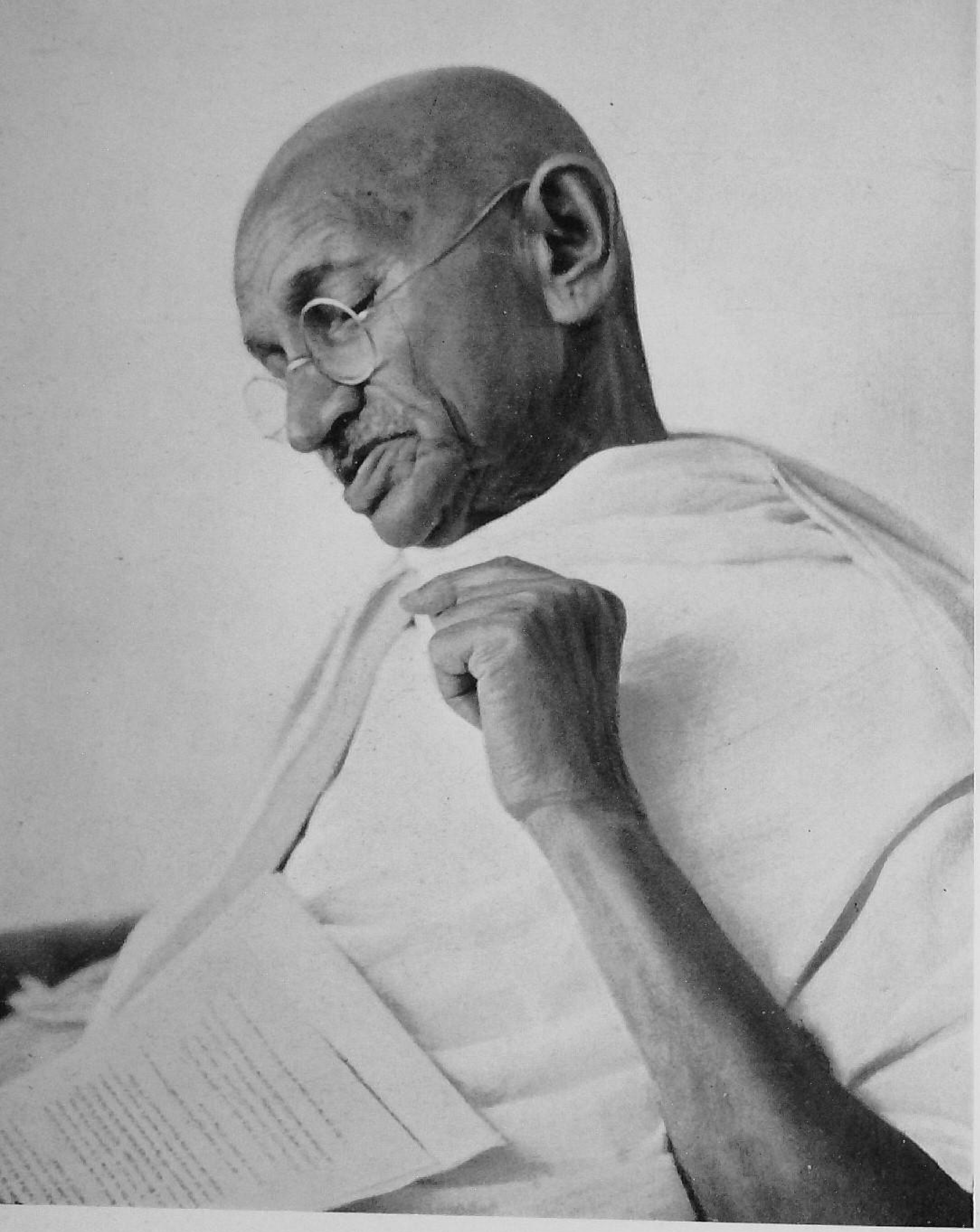


PHOTO : SUNIL JANAH

'Where he sat became a temple . . .'



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'A rock of purpose and . . .

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a lighthouse of truth . . .'

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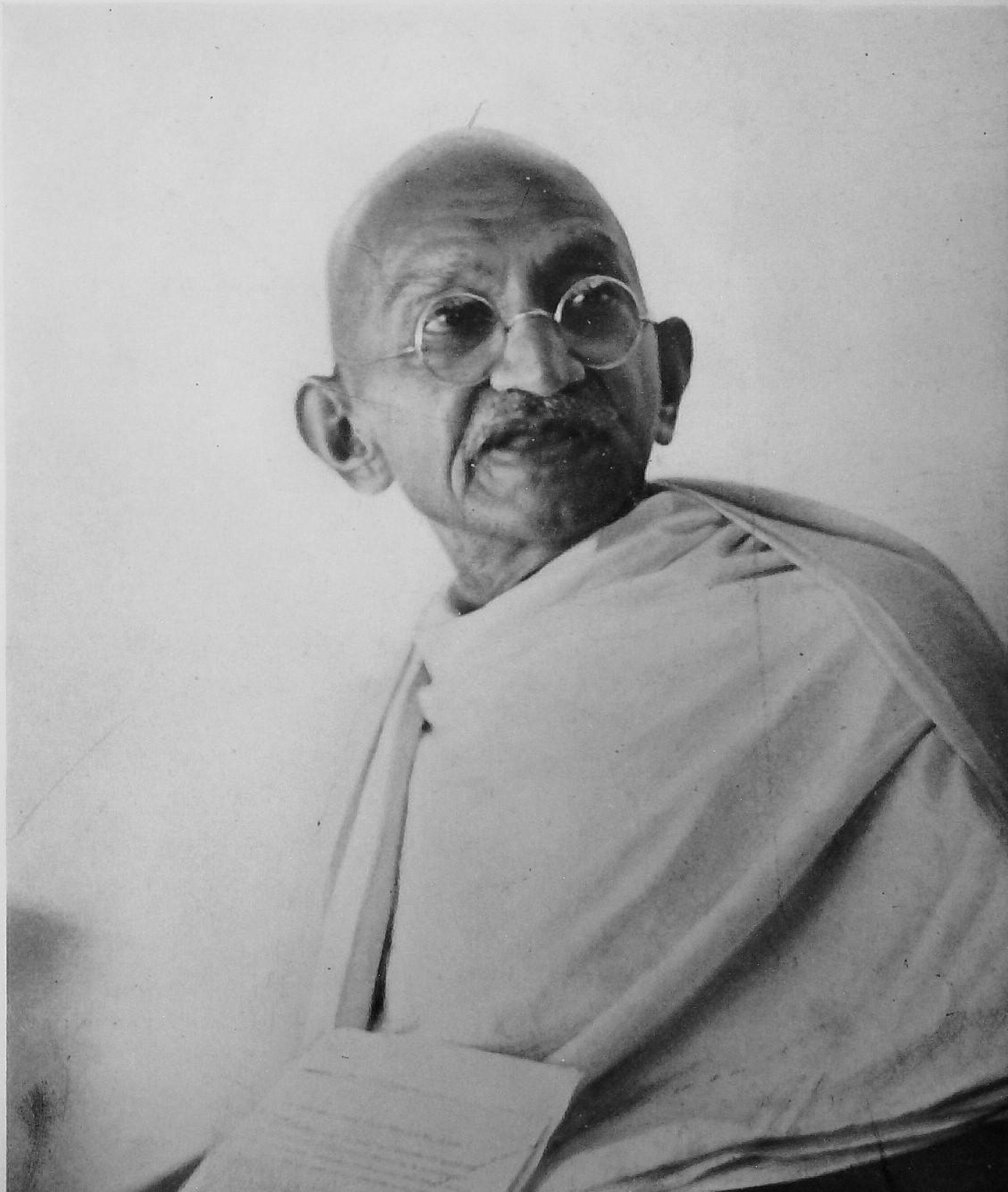

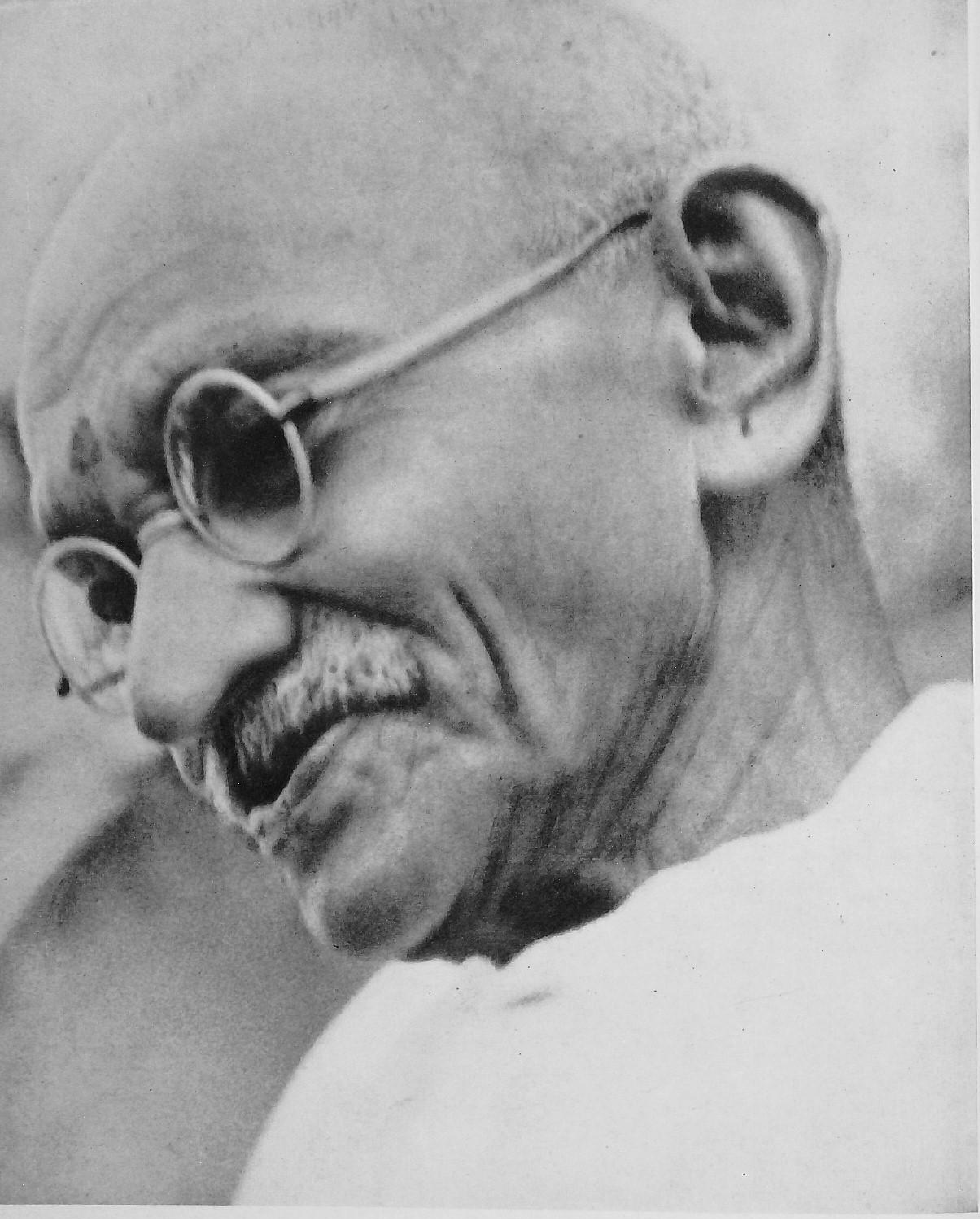

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activity of innumerable messengers of the new gospel of action. The peasant was shaken up and he began to emerge from his quiescent shell. The effect on us was different but equally far-reaching, for we saw, for the first time as it were, the villager in the intimacy of his mud hut and with the stark shadow of hunger always pursuing him. We learned our Indian economics more from these visits than from books and learned discourses. The emotional experience we had already undergone was emphasized and confirmed, and henceforward there could be no going back for us to our old life or our old standards, howsoever much our views might change subsequently.

Gandhiji held strong views on economic, social, and other matters. He did not try to impose all of these on the Congress, though he continued to develop his ideas, and sometimes in the process varied them, through his writings. But some he tried to push into the Congress. He proceeded cautiously, for he wanted to carry the people with him. Sometimes he went too far for the Congress and had to retrace his steps. Not many accepted his views in their entirety ; some disagreed with that fundamental outlook. But many accepted them in the modified form in which they came to the Congress as being suited to the circumstances then existing. In two respects the background of his thoughts had a vague but considerable influence: the fundamental test of everything was how far it benefited the masses, and the means were always important and could not be ignored even though the end in view was right, for the means governed the end and varied it.

A Hindu without any Dogma

Gandhiji was essentially a man of religion, a Hindu to the innermost depths of his being, and yet his conception of religion had nothing

to do with any dogma or custom or ritual.* It was basically concerned with his firm belief in the moral law, which he calls the Law of Truth or Love. Truth and non-violence appear to him to be the same thing or different aspects of one and the same thing, and he uses these words almost interchangeably.

Claiming to understand the spirit of Hinduism, he rejects every text or practice which does not fit in with his idealist interpretation of what it should be, calling it an interpolation or a subsequent accretion. "I decline to be a slave", he has said, "to precedents or practice I cannot understand or defend on a moral basis." And so in practice he is singularly free to take the path of his choice, to change and adapt himself, to develop his philosophy of life and action, subject only to the overriding consideration of the moral law as he conceives this to be. Whether that philosophy is right or wrong may be argued, but he insists on applying the same fundamental yardstick to everything, and himself specially. In politics, as in other aspects of life, this creates difficulties for the average person, and often misunderstanding. But no difficulty makes him swerve from the straight line of his choosing, though within limits he is continually adapting himself to a changing situation. Every reform that he suggests, every advice that he gives to others, he straightway applies to himself. He

* Gandhiji told the Federation of International Fellowships in January 1928 that "after long study and experience I have come to these conclusions, that: (1) all religions are true, (2) all religions have some error in them, (3) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism. My veneration for other faiths is the same as for my own faith. Consequently, the thought of conversion is impossible. . . . Our prayer for others ought never to be: 'God! give them the light thou hast given to me!' but: 'Give them all the light and truth they need for their highest development!'"

is always beginning with himself, and his words and actions fit into each other like a glove on the hand. And so, whatever happens, he never loses his integrity and there is always an organic completeness about his life and work. Even in his apparent failures he has seemed to grow in stature.

What was his idea of India which he was setting out to mould according to his own wishes and ideals? "I shall work for an India in which the poorest shall feel that it is their country, in whose making they have an effective voice, an India in which there shall be no high class and low class of people, an India in which all communities shall live in perfect harmony. . . . There can be no room in such an India for the curse of untouchability, for the curse of intoxicating drinks and drugs. . . . Women who will enjoy the same rights as men. . . . This is the India of my dreams."

Proud of his Hindu inheritance as he was, he tried to give to Hinduism a kind of universal attire and included all religions within the fold of truth. He refused to narrow his cultural inheritance. "Indian culture", he wrote, "is neither Hindu, Islamic nor any other, wholly. It is a fusion of all." Again he said: "I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other people's houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave." Influenced by modern thought currents, he never let go of his roots and clung to them tenaciously.

Spiritual Unity

And so he set about to restore the spiritual unity of the people and to break the barrier between the small westernized group at the top and the masses, to discover the living elements in the old roots and

to build upon them, to waken these masses out of their stupor and static condition and make them dynamic. In his single-track and yet many-sided nature the dominating impression that one gathered was his identification with the masses, a community of spirit with them, an amazing sense of unity with the dispossessed and poverty-stricken not only of India but of the world. Even religion, as everything else, took second place to his passion to raise these submerged people. "A semi-starved nation can have neither religion nor art nor organization." "Whatever can be useful to starving millions is beautiful to my mind. Let us give today first the vital things of life, and all the graces and ornaments of life will follow. . . . I want art and literature that can speak to millions." These unhappy dispossessed millions haunted him, and everything seemed to revolve round them. "For millions it is an eternal vigil or an eternal trance." His ambition, he said, was to "wipe every tear from every eye."

It is not surprising that this astonishingly vital man, full of self-confidence and an unusual kind of power, standing for equality and freedom for each individual, but measuring all this in terms of the poorest, fascinated the masses of India and attracted them like a magnet. He seemed to them to link up the past with the future and to make the dismal present appear just as a stepping-stone to that future of life and hope. And not the masses only, but intellectuals, and others also, though their minds were often troubled and confused and the change-over for them from the habits of lifetimes was more difficult. Thus he effected a vast psychological revolution not only among those who followed his lead but also among his opponents and those many neutrals who could not make up their minds what to think and what to do.

Congress was dominated by Gandhiji, and yet it was a peculiar domination, for the Congress was an active, rebellious, many-sided organization, full of variety of opinion, and not easily led this way or that. Often Gandhiji toned down his position to meet the wishes of others ; sometimes he accepted even an adverse decision. On some vital matters for him he was adamant, and on more than one occasion there came a break between him and the Congress. But always he was the symbol of India's independence and militant nationalism, the unyielding opponent of all those who sought to enslave her, and it was as such a symbol that people gathered to him and accepted his lead, even though they disagreed with him on other matters. They did not always accept that lead when there was no active struggle going on, but when the struggle was inevitable, that symbol became all-important and everything else was secondary.[7]

A Bourgeois Movement

It should be remembered that the nationalist movement in India, like all nationalist movements, was essentially a bourgeois movement. It represented the natural historical stage of development, and to consider it or to criticize it as a working-class movement is wrong. Gandhiji represented that movement and the Indian masses in relation to that movement to a supreme degree, and he became the voice of the Indian people to that extent. He functioned inevitably within the orbit of nationalist ideology, but the dominating passion that consumed him was a desire to raise the masses. In this respect he was always ahead of the nationalist movement, and he gradually made it, within the limits of its own ideology, turn in this direction. Economic events in India and the world powerfully pushed Indian nationalism

towards vital social changes, and today it hovers, somewhat undecided, on the brink of a new social ideology.

But the main contribution of Gandhiji to India and the Indian masses has been through the powerful movements which he launched through the National Congress. Through nation-wide action he sought to mould the millions, and largely succeeded in doing so, and changing them from a demoralized, timid, and hopeless mass, bullied and crushed by every dominant interest, and incapable of resistance, into a people with self-respect and self-reliance, resisting tyranny, and capable of united action and sacrifice for a larger cause. He made them think of political and economic issues, and every village and every bazaar hummed with argument and debate on the new ideas and hopes that filled the people. That was an amazing psychological change. The time was ripe for it, of course, and circumstances and world conditions worked for this change. But a great leader is necessary to take advantage of circumstances and conditions. Gandhiji was that leader, and he released many of the bonds that imprisoned and disabled our minds, and none of us who experienced it can ever forget that great feeling of release and exhilaration that came over the Indian people. Gandhiji has played a revolutionary role in India of the greatest importance because he knew how to make the most of the objective conditions and could reach the heart of the masses ; while groups with a more advanced ideology functioned largely in the air because they did not fit in with those conditions and could therefore not evoke any substantial response from the masses. . . .

Raising the Masses

It is perfectly true that Gandhiji, functioning in the nationalist plane,

does not think in terms of the conflict of classes, and tries to compose their differences. But the action he has indulged in and taught the people has inevitably raised mass consciousness tremendously and made social issues vital. And his insistence on the raising of the masses at the cost, wherever necessary, of vested interests has given a strong orientation to the national movement in favour of the masses.

Essentially, the Congress under Gandhiji's leadership has been a joint and anti-imperialist front. . . .

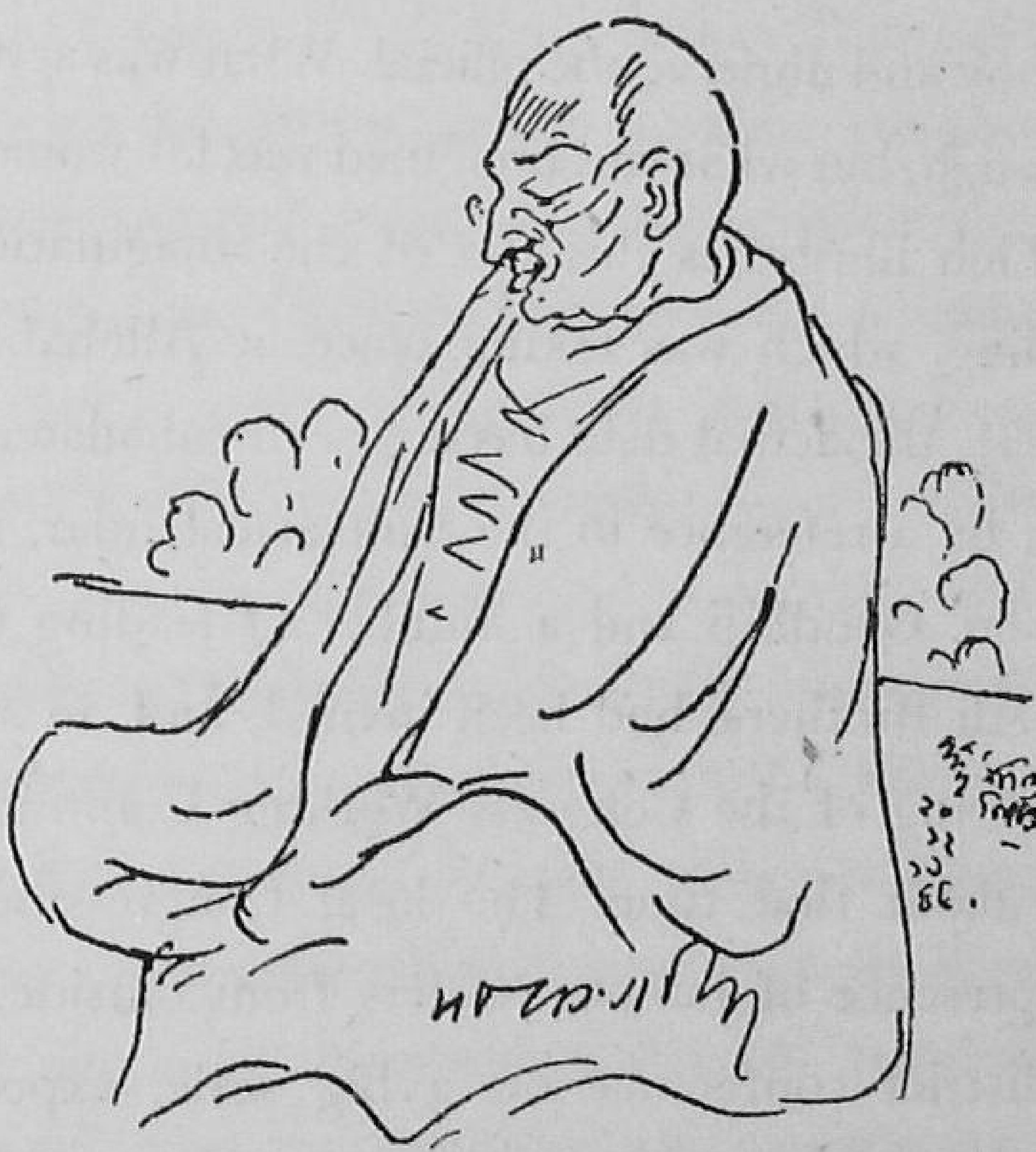
Gandhiji and the Congress must be judged by the policies they pursue and the action they indulge in. But behind this, personality counts and colours those policies and activities. In the case of a very exceptional person like Gandhiji the question of personality becomes especially important in order to understand and appraise him. An English journalist, Mr. George Slocombe, who has had a wide experience of men prominent and otherwise in public affairs all over the world, has referred to Gandhiji in a recent book of his, and the passage is interesting and worth quoting. He says: "I have never met any man more utterly honest, more transparently sincere, less given to egotism, self-conscious pride, opportunism, and ambition which are found in greater or less degree in all the other great political figures of the world." An English journalist's opinion need not carry much weight with us, nor does the sincerity of a person excuse a wrong policy or mistaken ideas. But as it happens, that opinion is shared by millions in India, and it is very superficial criticism to dispose of such a unique and outstanding personality by cheap and well-worn phrases which are applied indiscriminately to the average politician. We in India have often differed from Gandhiji, we differ from him still in many ways, and sometimes we may follow different paths, but it has been

the greatest privilege of our lives to work with him and under him for a great cause. To us he has represented the spirit and honour of India, the yearning of her sorrowing millions to be rid of their innumerable burdens, and an insult to him by the British government or others has been an insult to India and her people.[8]

World Federation

Gandhiji gave a turn to our nationalist movement which lessened the feelings of frustration and bitterness. Those feelings continued, but I do not know of any other nationalist movement which has been so free from hatred. Gandhiji was an intense nationalist ; he was also, at the same time, a man who felt he had a message not only for India but for the world, and he ardently desired world peace. His nationalism, therefore, had a certain world outlook and was entirely free from any aggressive intent. Desiring the independence of India, he had come to believe that a world federation of interdependent states was the only right goal, however distant that might be. He had said: "My idea of nationalism is that my country may become free, that if need be the whole of the country may die, so that the human race may live. There is no room for race hatred here. Let that be our nationalism." And again: "I do want to think in terms of the whole world. My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore, my service of India includes the service of humanity. . . . Isolated independence is not the goal of the world states. It is voluntary interdependence. The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent states, warring one against another, but a federation of friendly, interdependent states. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our

country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence. I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence."[9]



Gandhiji at prayer by Nandalal Bose

2 A Year of Great Tension

The year 1921 was a year of great tension, and there was much to irritate and annoy and unnerve the official. What was actually happening was bad enough, but what was imagined was far worse. I remember an instance which illustrates this riot of the imagination. My sister Swarup's wedding, which was taking place at Allahabad, was fixed for May 10, 1921, the actual date having been calculated, as usual on such occasions, by a reference to the Samvat calendar, and an auspicious day chosen. Gandhiji and a number of leading Congressmen, including the Ali Brothers, had been invited, and, to suit their convenience, a meeting of the Congress Working Committee was fixed at Allahabad about that time. The local Congressmen wanted to profit by the presence of famous leaders from outside, and so they organized a district conference on a big scale, expecting a large number of peasants from the surrounding rural areas.

There was a great deal of bustle and excitement in Allahabad on account of these political gatherings. This had a remarkable effect on the nerves of some people. I learned one day through a barrister friend that many English people were thoroughly upset and expected some sudden upheaval in the city. They distrusted their Indian

servants, and carried about revolvers in their pockets. It was even said privately that the Allahabad Fort was kept in readiness for the English colony to retire there in case of need. I was much surprised and could not make out why anyone should contemplate the possibility of a rising in the sleepy and peaceful city of Allahabad just when the very apostle of non-violence was going to visit us. Oh, it was said, May 10 (the day accidentally fixed for my sister's marriage) was the anniversary of the outbreak of the Mutiny at Meerut in 1857, and this was going to be celebrated!

Religion and Politics

Gandhiji was continually laying stress on the religious and spiritual side of the movement. His religion was not dogmatic, but it did mean a definitely religious outlook on life, and the whole movement was strongly influenced by this and took on a revivalist character so far as the masses were concerned. The great majority of Congress workers naturally tried to model themselves after their leader and even repeated his language. And yet Gandhiji's leading colleagues in the Working Committee—my father, Deshbandhu Das, Lala Lajpat Rai, and others—were not men of religion in the ordinary sense of the word, and they considered political problems on the political plane only. In their public utterances they did not bring in religion. But whatever they said had far less influence than the force of their personal example—had they not given up a great deal that the world values and taken to simpler ways of living? This in itself was taken as a sign of religion and helped in spreading the atmosphere of revivalism.

I used to be troubled sometimes at the growth of this religious

element in our politics, on both the Hindu and the Moslem side. I did not like it at all. Much that moulvies and maulanas and swamis and the like said in their public addresses seemed to me most unfortunate. Their history and sociology and economics appeared to me all wrong, and the religious twist that was given to everything prevented all clear thinking. Even some of Gandhiji's phrases sometimes jarred upon me—thus his frequent reference to *Rama Raj* as a golden age which was to return. But I was powerless to intervene, and I consoled myself with the thought that Gandhiji used the words because they were well known and understood by the masses. He had an amazing knack of reaching the heart of the people.

But I did not worry myself much over these matters. I was too full of my work and the progress of our movement to care for such trifles, as I thought at the time they were. A vast movement had all sorts and kinds of people in it, and, so long as our main direction was correct, a few eddies and backwaters did not matter. As for Gandhiji himself, he was a very difficult person to understand; sometimes his language was almost incomprehensible to an average modern. But we felt that we knew him quite well enough to realize that he was a great and unique man and a glorious leader, and, having put our faith in him, we gave him an almost blank cheque, for the time being at least. Often we discussed his fads and peculiarities among ourselves and said, half humorously, that when *Swaraj* came these fads must not be encouraged.

Many of us, however, were too much under his influence in political and other matters to remain wholly immune even in the sphere of religion. Where a direct attack might not have succeeded, many an indirect approach went a long way to undermine the

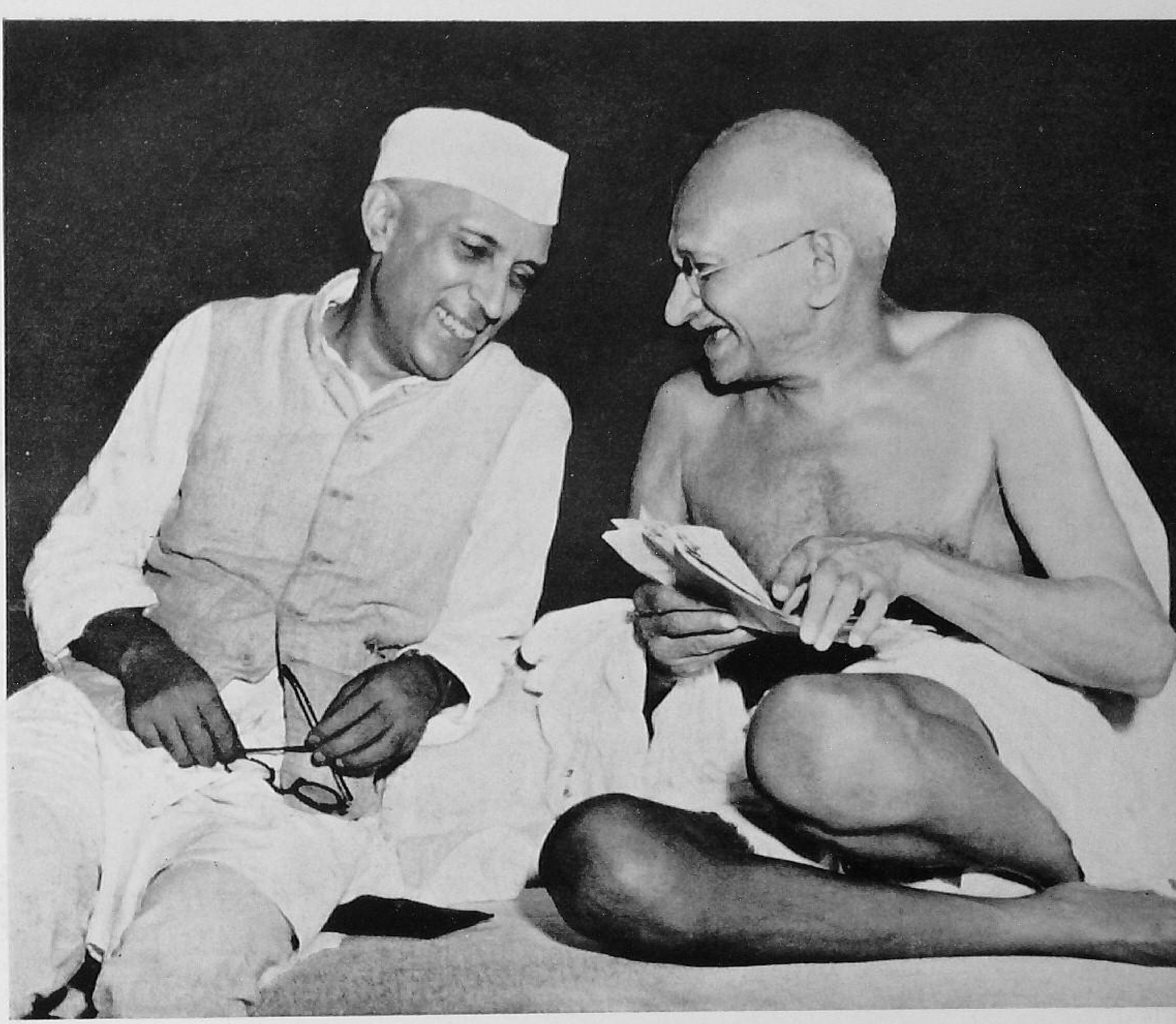


PHOTO : ASSOCIATED PRESS OF AMERICA

A joke with Nehru...

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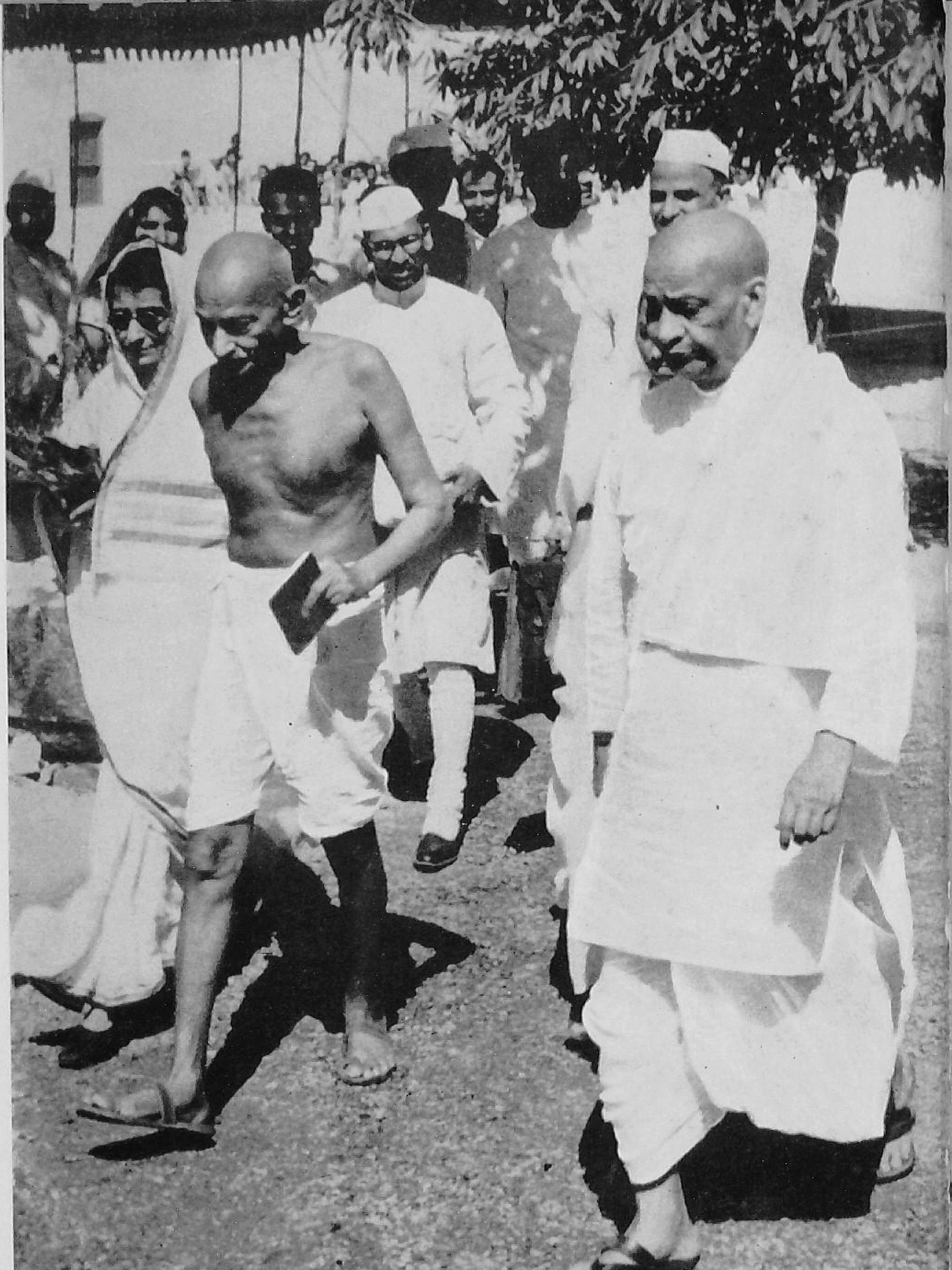

PHOTO : RAJ GOPAL

A walk with Patel...

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defences. The outward ways of religion did not appeal to me, and above all, I disliked the exploitation of the people by the so-called men of religion, but still I toned down toward it. I came nearer to a religious frame of mind in 1921 than at any other time since my early boyhood. Even so I did not come very near.

Ethical Politics

What I admired was the moral and ethical side of our movement and of *Satyagraha*. I did not give an absolute allegiance to the doctrine of non-violence or accept it forever, but it attracted me more and more, and the belief grew upon me that, situated as we were in India and with our background and traditions, it was the right policy for us. The spiritualization of politics, using the word not in its narrow religious sense, seemed to me a fine idea. A worthy end should have worthy means leading up to it. That seemed not only a good ethical doctrine but sound, practical politics, for the means that are not good often defeat the end in view and raise new problems and difficulties. And then it seemed so unbecoming, so degrading to the self-respect of an individual or a nation to submit to such means, to go through the mire. How can one escape being sullied by it? How can we march ahead swiftly and with dignity if we stoop or crawl?

Such were my thoughts then. And the non-co-operation movement offered me what I wanted—the goal of national freedom and (as I thought) the ending of the exploitation of the underdog, and the means which satisfied my moral sense and gave me a sense of personal freedom. So great was this personal satisfaction that even a possibility of failure did not count for much, for such failure could only be temporary. I did not understand or feel drawn to the metaphysical

part of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, but I liked to read the verses—recited every evening in Gandhiji's ashrama prayers—which say what a man should be like: Calm of purpose, serene, and unmoved, doing his job and not caring overmuch for the result of his action. Not being very calm or detached myself, I suppose, this ideal appealed to me all the more.

The Spell of Gandhiji

Nineteen-twenty-one was an extraordinary year for us. There was a strange mixture of nationalism and politics and religion and mysticism and fanaticism. Behind all this was agrarian trouble and, in the big cities, a rising working-class movement. Nationalism and a vague but intense country-wide idealism sought to bring together all these various, and sometimes mutually contradictory, discontents, and succeeded to a remarkable degree. And yet this nationalism itself was a composite force, and behind it could be distinguished a Hindu nationalism, a Moslem nationalism partly looking beyond the frontiers of India, and, what was more in consonance with the spirit of the times, an Indian nationalism. For the time being they overlapped and all pulled together. It was *Hindu-Musalman ki jai* everywhere. It was remarkable how Gandhiji seemed to cast a spell on all classes and groups of people and drew them into one motley crowd struggling in one direction. He became, indeed (to use a phrase which has been applied to another leader), "a symbolic expression of the confused desires of the people."

Even more remarkable was the fact that these desires and passions were relatively free from hatred of the alien rulers against whom they were directed. Nationalism is essentially an anti feeling, and it feeds and fattens on hatred and anger against other national

groups, and especially against the foreign rulers of a subject country. There was certainly this hatred and anger in India in 1921 against the British, but in comparison with other countries similarly situated, it was extraordinarily little. Undoubtedly this was due to Gandhiji's insistence on the implications of non-violence. It was also due to the feeling of release and power that came to the whole country with the inauguration of the movement and the widespread belief in success in the near future. Why be angry and full of hate when we were doing so well and were likely to win through soon? We felt that we could afford to be generous.

We were not so generous in our hearts, though our actions were circumspect and proper, toward the handful of our own countrymen who took sides against us and opposed the national movement. It was not a question of hatred or anger, for they carried no weight whatever and we could ignore them. But deep within us was contempt for their weakness and opportunism and betrayal of national honour and self-respect.

So we went on, vaguely but intensely, the exhilaration of action holding us in its grip. But about our goal there was an entire absence of clear thinking. It seems surprising now, how completely we ignored the theoretical aspects, the philosophy of our movement as well as the definite objective that we should have. Of course we all grew eloquent about *Swaraj*, but each one of us probably interpreted the word in his or her own way. To most of the younger men it meant political independence, or something like it, and a democratic form of government, and we said so in our public utterances. Many of us also thought that inevitably this would result in a lessening of the burdens that crushed the workers and the peasantry. But it was

obvious that to most of our leaders *Swaraj* meant something much less than independence. Gandhiji was delightfully vague on the subject, and he did not encourage clear thinking about it either. But he always spoke, vaguely but definitely, in terms of the underdog, and this brought great comfort to many of us, although, at the same time, he was full of assurances to the top dog also. Gandhiji's stress was never on the intellectual approach to a problem but on character and piety. He did succeed amazingly in giving backbone and character to the Indian people.

It was this extraordinary stiffening up of the masses that filled us with confidence. A demoralized, backward, and broken-up people suddenly straightened their backs and lifted their heads and took part in disciplined, joint action on a country-wide scale. This action itself, we felt, would give irresistible power to the masses. We ignored the necessity of thought behind the action; we forgot that without a conscious ideology and objective the energy and enthusiasm of the masses must end largely in smoke. To some extent the revivalist element in our movement carried us on; a feeling that non-violence as conceived for political or economic movements or for righting wrongs was a new message which our people were destined to give to the world. We became victims to the curious illusion of all peoples and all nations that in some way they are a chosen race. Non-violence was the moral equivalent of war, and of all violent struggle. It was not merely an ethical alternative, but it was effective also.

Few of us, I think, accepted Gandhiji's old ideas about machinery and modern civilization. We thought that even he looked upon them as utopian and as largely inapplicable to modern conditions. Certainly most of us were not prepared to reject the achievements of modern

civilization, although we may have felt that some variation to suit Indian conditions was possible. Personally, I have always felt attracted toward big machinery and fast travelling. Still, there can be no doubt that Gandhiji's ideology influenced many people and made them critical of the machine and all its consequences. So, while some looked to the future, others looked back to the past. And, curiously, both felt that the joint action they were indulging in was worth while, and this made it easy to bear sacrifice and face self-denial.[10]

Gandhiji's First Arrest

During the months of December 1921 and January 1922 it is estimated that about thirty thousand persons were sentenced to imprisonment in connection with the non-co-operation movement. But, though most of the prominent men and workers were in prison, the leader of the whole struggle, Mahatma Gandhi, was still out, issuing from day to day messages and directions which inspired the people, as well as checking many an undesirable activity. The government had not touched him so far, for it feared the consequences, the reactions on the Indian Army and the police.

Suddenly, early in February 1922, the whole scene shifted, and we in prison learned, to our amazement and consternation, that Gandhiji had stopped the aggressive aspects of our struggle, that he had suspended civil resistance. We read that this was because of what had happened near the village of Chauri Chaura, where a mob of villagers had retaliated on some policemen by setting fire to the police station and burning half a dozen or so policemen in it.

We were angry when we learned of this stoppage of our struggle at a time when we seemed to be consolidating our position and

advancing on all fronts. But our disappointment and anger in prison could do little good to anyone; civil resistance stopped and non-co-operation wilted away. After many months of strain and anxiety the government breathed again, and for the first time had the opportunity of taking the initiative. A few weeks later it arrested Gandhiji and sentenced him for a long term of imprisonment.

The sudden suspension of our movement after the Chauri Chaura incident was resented, I think, by almost all the prominent Congress leaders—other than Gandhiji, of course. My father (who was in jail at the time) was much upset by it. The younger people were naturally even more agitated. Our mounting hopes tumbled to the ground, and this mental reaction was to be expected. What troubled us even more were the reasons given for this suspension and the consequences that seemed to flow from them. Chauri Chaura may have been and was a deplorable occurrence and wholly opposed to the spirit of the non-violent movement; but were a remote village and a mob of excited peasants in an out-of-the-way place going to put an end, for some time at least, to our national struggle for freedom? If this was the inevitable consequence of a sporadic act of violence, then surely there was something lacking in the philosophy and technique of a non-violent struggle. For it seemed to us to be impossible to guarantee against the occurrence of some such untoward incident. Must we train the three hundred odd millions of India in the theory and practice of non-violent action before we could go forward? And, even so, how many of us could say that under extreme provocation from the police we would be able to remain perfectly peaceful? But even if we succeeded, what of the numerous *agents provocateurs*, stool pigeons, and the like who crept into our movement and indulged in violence themselves or

induced others to do so? If this was the sole condition of its function, then the non-violent method of resistance would always fail.

We had accepted that method, the Congress had made that method its own, because of a belief in its effectiveness. Gandhiji had placed it before the country not only as the right method but as the most effective one for our purpose. In spite of its negative name it was a dynamic method, the very opposite of a meek submission to a tyrant's will. It was not a coward's refuge from action, but the brave man's defiance of evil and nation subjection. But what was the use of the bravest and the strongest if a few odd persons—maybe even our opponents in the guise of friends—had the power to upset or end our movement by their rash behaviour?

"The Doctrine of the Sword"

Gandhiji had pleaded for the adoption of the way of non-violence, of peaceful non-co-operation, with all the eloquence and persuasive power which he so abundantly possessed. His language had been simple and unadorned, his voice and appearance cool and clear and devoid of all emotion, but behind that outward covering of ice there was the heat of a blazing fire and concentrated passion, and the words he uttered winged their way to the innermost recesses of our minds and hearts, and created a strange ferment there. The way he pointed out was hard and difficult, but it was a brave path, and it seemed to lead to the promised land of freedom. Because of that promise we pledged our faith and marched ahead. In a famous article—"The Doctrine of the Sword"—he had written in 1920:

I do believe that when there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. . . . I would rather have India

resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she should in a cowardly manner become or remain a helpless victim to her own dishonour. But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment.

Forgiveness adorns a soldier. But abstinence is forgiveness only when there is power to punish; it is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature. A mouse hardly forgives a cat when it allows itself to be torn to pieces by her. . . . But I do not believe India to be helpless, I do not believe myself to be a helpless creature. . . .

Let me not be misunderstood. Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will. . . .

I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the rishis and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute, and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit.

I have therefore ventured to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice. For *satyagraha* and its offshoots, non-co-operation and civil resistance, are nothing but new names for the law of suffering. The rishis who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence.

Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering.

It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evildoer, but it means the putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul, and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or regeneration.

And so I am not pleading for India to practise non-violence because it is weak. I want her to practise non-violence being conscious of her strength and power. . . . I want India to recognize that she has a soul that cannot perish, and that can rise triumphant above any physical weakness and defy the physical combination of a whole world. . . .

I isolate this non-co-operation from Sinn Feinism, for it is so conceived as to be incapable of being offered side by side with violence. But I invite even the school of violence to give this peaceful non-co-operation a trial. It will not fail through its inherent weakness. It may fail because of poverty of response. Then will be the time for real danger. The high-souled men, who are unable to suffer national humiliation any longer, will want to vent their wrath. They will take to violence. So far as I know, they must perish without delivering themselves or their country from the wrong. If India takes up the doctrine of the sword, she may gain momentary victory. Then India will cease to be the pride of my heart. I am wedded to India because I owe my all to her. I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world.

We were moved by these arguments, but for us and for the National Congress as a whole the non-violent method was not, and could not be, a religion or an unchallengeable creed or dogma. It could only be a policy and a method promising certain results, and by those

results it would have to be finally judged. Individuals might make of it a religion or incontrovertible creed. But no political organization, so long as it remained political, could do so.

Chauri Chaura and its consequences made us examine these implications of non-violence as a method, and we felt that, if Gandhiji's argument for the suspension of civil resistance was correct, our opponents would always have the power to create circumstances which would necessarily result in our abandoning the struggle. Was this the fault of the non-violent method itself or of Gandhiji's interpretation of it? After all, he was the author and originator of it, and who could be a better judge of what it was and what it was not? And without him where was our movement? . . .

Gandhiji Arrested Again

My offence was distributing notices for a *hartal*. This was no offence under the law then, though I believe it is one now, for we are rapidly advancing toward dominion status. However, I was sentenced. Three months later I was informed in the prison, where I was with my father and others, that some revising authority had come to the conclusion that I was wrongly sentenced and I was to be discharged. I was surprised, as no one had taken any step on my behalf. The suspension of civil resistance had apparently galvanized the revising judges into activity. I was sorry to go out, leaving my father behind.

I decided to go almost immediately to Gandhiji in Ahmedabad. Before I arrived there, he had been arrested, and my interview with him took place in Sabarmati Prison. I was present at his trial. It was a memorable occasion, and those of us who were present are not likely ever to forget it. The judge, an Englishman, behaved with dignity

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and feeling. Gandhiji's statement to the court was a most moving one, and we came away emotionally stirred and with the impress of his vivid phrases and striking images in our minds.[11]

Illness and Release

Early in 1924 there came suddenly the news of the serious illness of Gandhiji in prison, followed by his removal to a hospital and an operation. India was numbed with anxiety; we held our breaths almost and waited, full of fear. The crisis passed, and a stream of people began to reach Poona from all parts of the country to see him. He was still in hospital, a prisoner under guard, but he was permitted to see a limited number of friends. Father and I visited him in the hospital.

He was not taken back from the hospital to the prison. As he was convalescing, the government remitted the rest of his sentence and discharged him. He had then served about two years out of the six years to which he had been sentenced. He went to Juhu, by the seaside near Bombay, to recuperate.

Our family also trekked to Juhu, and established itself in a tiny little cottage by the sea. We spent some weeks there, and I had, after a long gap, a holiday after my heart, for I could indulge in swimming and running and riding on the beach. The main purpose of our stay, however, was not holidaymaking, but discussions with Gandhiji. Father wanted to explain to him the Swarajist position, and to gain his passive co-operation at least, if not his active sympathy. I was also anxious to have some light thrown on the problems that were troubling me. I wanted to know what his future programme of action was going to be.

The Juhu talks, so far as the Swarajists were concerned, did not

succeed in winning Gandhiji, or even in influencing him to any extent. Behind all the friendly talk and the courteous gestures, the fact remained that there was no compromise. They agreed to differ, and statements to this effect were issued to the press.

I also returned from Juhu a little disappointed, for Gandhiji did not resolve a single one of my doubts. As is usual with him, he refused to look into the future or lay down any long-distance programme.

Ever since Gandhiji appeared on the Indian political scene, there has been no going back in popularity for him, so far as the masses are concerned. There has been a progressive increase in his popularity, and this process still continues. They may not carry out his wishes, for human nature is often weak, but their hearts are full of good will for him. When objective conditions help, they rise in huge mass movements; otherwise they lie low. A leader does not create a mass movement out of nothing, as if by a stroke of the magician's wand. He can take advantage of the conditions themselves when they arise; he can prepare for them, but not create them.

There is a waning and a waxing of Gandhiji's popularity among the intelligentsia. In moments of forward-going enthusiasm they follow him; when the inevitable reaction comes, they grow critical. But even so the great majority of them bow down to him. Partly this has been due to the absence of any other effective programme. The Liberals and various groups resembling them do not count; those who believe in terroristic violence are completely out of court in the modern world and are considered ineffective and out of date. The socialist programme is still little known, and it frightens the upper-class members of the Congress.

After a brief political estrangement in the middle of 1924, the old relations between my father and Gandhiji were resumed and they grew even more cordial. However much they differed from one another, each had the warmest regard and respect for the other. What was it that they so respected? Father has given us a glimpse into his mind in a brief foreword he contributed to a booklet called "Thought Currents," containing selections from Gandhiji's writings:

I have heard [he writes] of saints and supermen, but have never had the pleasure of meeting them, and must confess to a feeling of scepticism about their real existence. I believe in men and things manly. The "Thought Currents" preserved in this volume have emanated from a man and are things manly. They are illustrative of two great attributes of human nature—Faith and Strength. . . .

"What is all this going to lead to?" asks the man with neither faith nor strength in him. The answer "to victory or death" does not appeal to him. . . . Meanwhile the humble and lowly figure standing erect . . . on the firm footholds of faith unshakable and strength unconquerable continues to send out to his countrymen his message of sacrifice and suffering for the motherland. That message finds echo in millions of hearts. . . .

And he finished up by quoting Swinburne's lines:

Have we not men with us royal,
Men the masters of things? . . .

Evidently he wanted to stress the fact that he did not admire

Gandhiji as a saint or a mahatma, but as a man. Strong and unbending himself, he admired strength of spirit in him. For it was clear that this little man of poor physique had something of steel in him, something rocklike which did not yield to physical powers, however great they might be. And in spite of his unimpressive features, his loincloth and bare body, there was a royalty and a kingliness in him which compelled a willing obeisance from others. Consciously and deliberately meek and humble, yet he was full of power and authority, and he knew it, and at times he was imperious enough, issuing commands which had to be obeyed. His calm, deep eyes would hold one and gently probe into the depths; his voice, clear and limpid, would purr its way into the heart and evoke an emotional response. Whether his audience consisted of one person or a thousand, the charm and magnetism of the man passed on to it, and each one had a feeling of communion with the speaker. This feeling had little to do with the mind, though the appeal to the mind was not wholly ignored. But mind and reason definitely had second place. This process of "spellbinding" was not brought about by oratory or the hypnotism of silken phrases. The language was always simple and to the point, and seldom was an unnecessary word used. It was the utter sincerity of the man and his personality that gripped; he gave the impression of tremendous inner reserves of power. Perhaps also it was a tradition that had grown up about him which helped in creating a suitable atmosphere. A stranger, ignorant of this tradition and not in harmony with the surroundings, would probably not have been touched by that spell, or, at any rate, not to the same extent. And yet one of the most remarkable things about Gandhiji was, and is, his capacity to win over, or at least to disarm, his opponents.

Gandhiji had little sense of beauty or artistry in man-made objects, though he admired natural beauty. The Taj Mahal was for him an embodiment of forced labour and little more. His sense of smell was feeble. And yet in his own way he had discovered the art of living and had made of his life an artistic whole. Every gesture had meaning and grace, without a false touch. There were no rough edges or sharp corners about him, no trace of vulgarity or commonness, in which, unhappily, our middle classes excel. Having found an inner peace, he radiated it to others and marched through life's tortuous ways with firm and undaunted step.

How different was my father from him! But in him too there was strength of personality and a measure of kingliness, and the lines of Swinburne he had quoted would apply to him also. In any gathering in which he was present he would inevitably be the centre and the hub. Whatever the place where he sat at table, it would become, as an eminent English judge said later, the head of the table. He was neither meek nor mild, and, again unlike Gandhiji, he seldom spared those who differed from him. Consciously imperious, he evoked great loyalty as well as bitter opposition. It was difficult to feel neutral about him; one had to like him or dislike him. With a broad forehead, tight lips, and a determined chin, he had a marked resemblance to the busts of the Roman emperors in the museums in Italy. Many friends in Italy who saw his photograph with us remarked on this resemblance. In later years especially when his head was covered with silver hair—unlike me, he kept his hair to the end—there was a magnificence about him and a grand manner, which is sadly to seek in this world of today. I suppose I am partial to him, but I miss his noble presence in a world full of pettiness and weakness. I look round in

spent many weeks in these provinces during the hottest part of the year. I accompanied him occasionally for a few days at a time and, despite previous experience, could not help marvelling at the vast crowds he attracted. This was especially noticeable in our eastern districts, like Gorakhpur, where the swarms of human beings reminded one of hordes of locusts. As we motored through the rural areas, we would have gatherings of from ten thousand to twenty-five thousand every few miles, and the principal meeting of the day might even exceed a hundred thousand. There were no broadcasting facilities, except rarely in a few big cities, and it was manifestly impossible to be heard by these crowds. Probably they did not expect to hear anything; they were satisfied if they saw the Mahatma. Gandhiji usually addressed them briefly, avoiding undue strain; it would have been quite impossible to carry on otherwise in this fashion from hour to hour and day to day.

I did not accompany him throughout his United Provinces tour as I could be of no special use to him and there was no point in my adding to the number of the touring party. I had no objection to crowds, but there was not sufficient inducement to get pushed and knocked about and my feet crushed—the usual fate of people accompanying Gandhiji. I had plenty of other work to do and had no desire to confine myself to khadi propaganda, which seemed to me a relatively minor activity in view of the developing political situation. To some extent I resented Gandhiji's preoccupation with non-political issues, and I could never understand the background of his thought. In those days he was collecting funds for khadi work, and he would say frequently that he wanted money for *Daridranarayan*, the "Lord of the Poor," or "God that resides in the poor"; meaning thereby, pre-

sumably, that he wanted it to help the poor to find employment and work in cottage industries. But behind that word there seemed to be a glorification of poverty; God was especially the Lord of the poor; they were His chosen people. That, I suppose, is the usual religious attitude everywhere. I could not appreciate it, for poverty seemed to me a hateful thing, to be fought and rooted out and not to be encouraged in any way. This inevitably led to an attack on a system which tolerated and produced poverty, and those who shrank from this had of necessity to justify poverty in some way. They could only think in terms of scarcity and could not picture a world abundantly supplied with the necessities of life; probably, according to them, the rich and the poor would always be with us.

Whenever I had occasion to discuss this with Gandhiji, he would lay stress on the rich treating their riches as a trust for the people; it was a viewpoint of considerable antiquity, and one comes across it frequently in India as well as medieval Europe.[13]

Independence Day

Independence Day came, January 26, 1930, and it revealed to us, as in a flash, the earnest and enthusiastic mood of the country. There was something vastly impressive about the great gatherings everywhere, peacefully and solemnly taking the pledge of independence without any speeches or exhortation. This celebration gave the necessary impetus to Gandhiji, and he felt, with his sure touch on the pulse of the people, that the time was ripe for action. Events followed then in quick succession, like a drama working up to its climax.

As civil disobedience approached and electrified the atmosphere, our thoughts went back to the movement of 1921-22 and the manner

of its sudden suspension after Chauri Chaura. The country was more disciplined now, and there was a clearer appreciation of the nature of the struggle. The technique was understood to some extent, but more important still from Gandhiji's point of view, it was fully realized by everyone that he was terribly in earnest about non-violence. There could be no doubt about that now, as there probably was in the minds of some people ten years before. Despite all this, how could we possibly be certain that an outbreak of violence might not occur in some locality either spontaneously or as the result of an intrigue? And, if such an incident occurred, what would be its effect on our civil disobedience movement? Would it be suddenly wound up as before? That prospect was most disconcerting.

Gandhiji probably thought over this question also in his own way, though the problem that seemed to trouble him, as far as I could gather from scraps of conversation, was put differently.

The non-violent method of action to bring about a change for the better was to him the only right method and, if rightly pursued, an infallible method. Must it be said that this method required a specially favourable atmosphere for its functioning and success, and that it should not be tried if outward conditions were not suited to it? That led to the conclusion that the non-violent method was not meant for all contingencies, and was thus neither a universal nor an infallible method. This conclusion was intolerable for Gandhiji, for he firmly believed that it was a universal and infallible method. Therefore, necessarily, it must function even though the external conditions were unfavourable, and even in the midst of strife and violence. The way of its functioning might be varied to suit varying circumstances, but to stop it would be a confession of failure of the method itself.

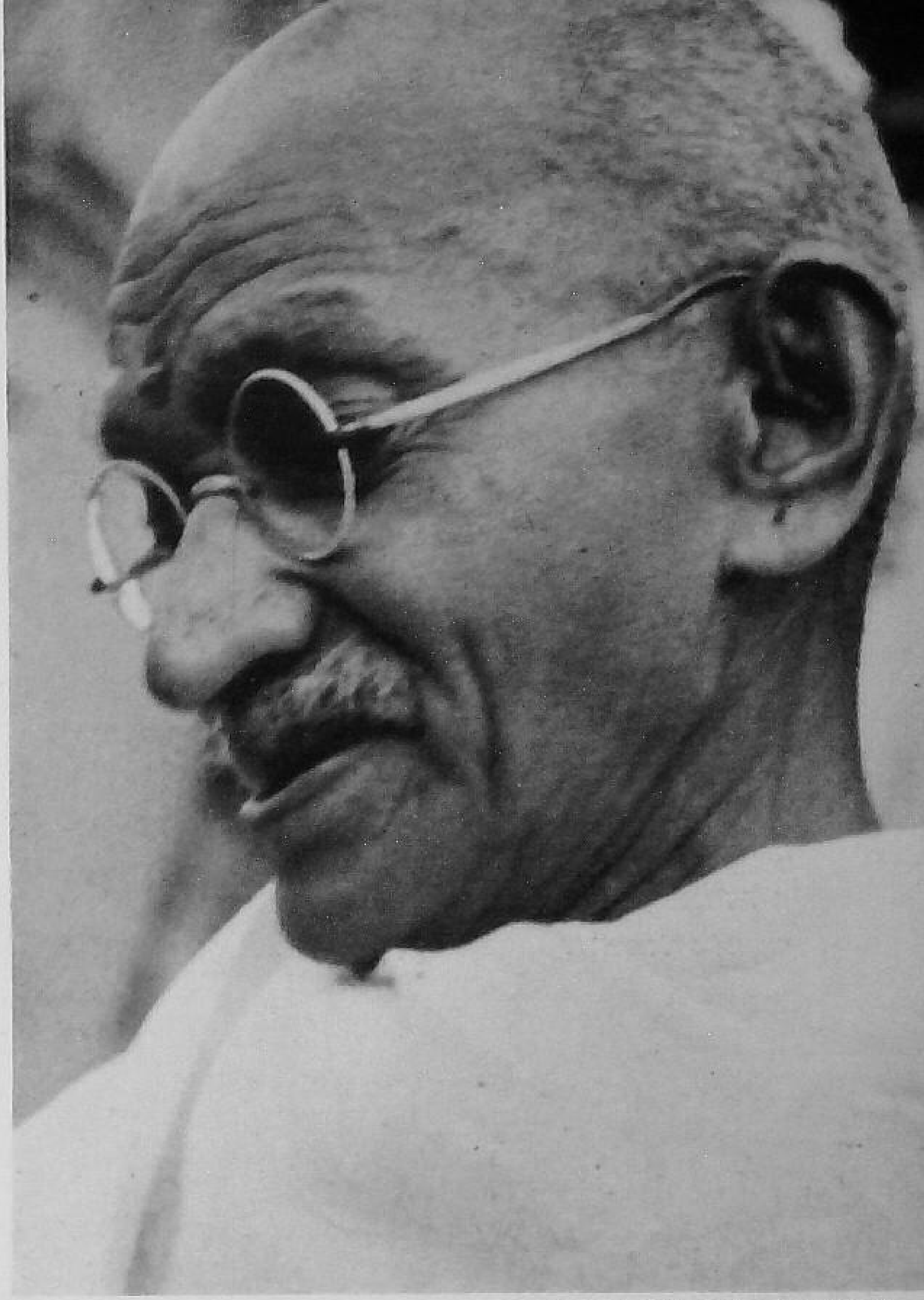

PHOTO : SUNIL JANAH

At Santiniketan.

PHOTO : SAMBHU SAHA

In Ahmedabad.

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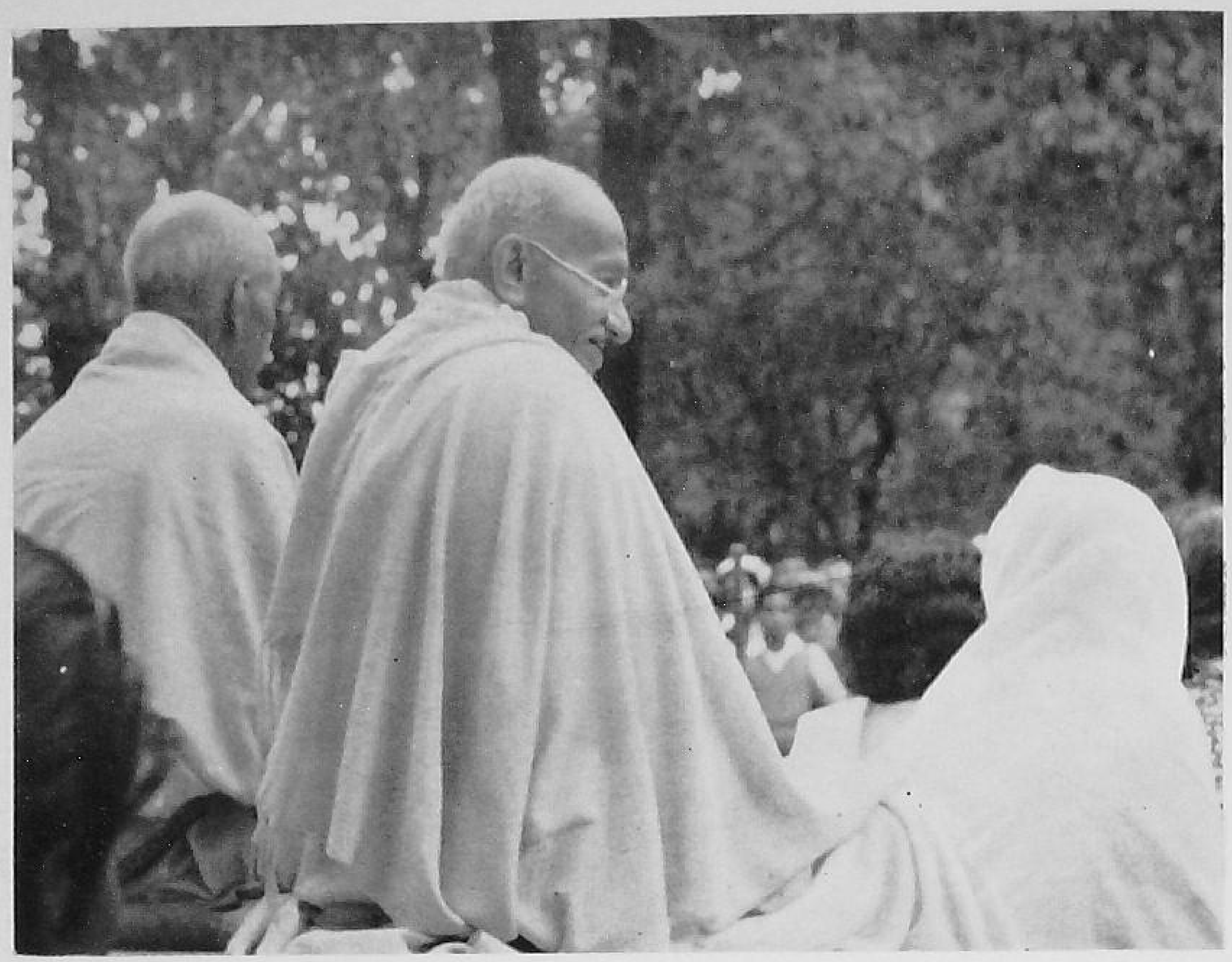
Gandhiji at evening prayer in Simla. Below : In London September, 1931. Right : Gandhiji at work in a railway compartment.



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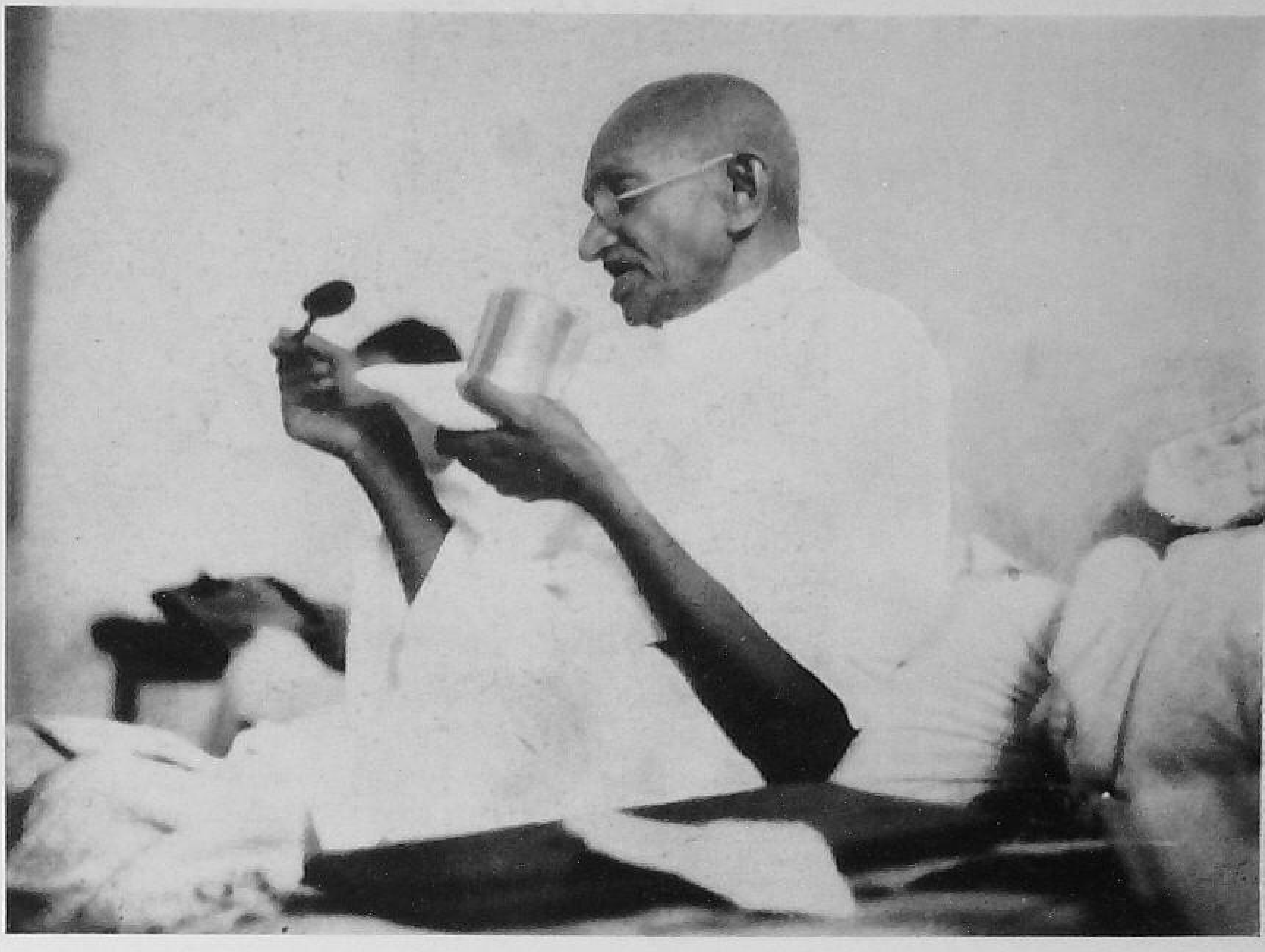
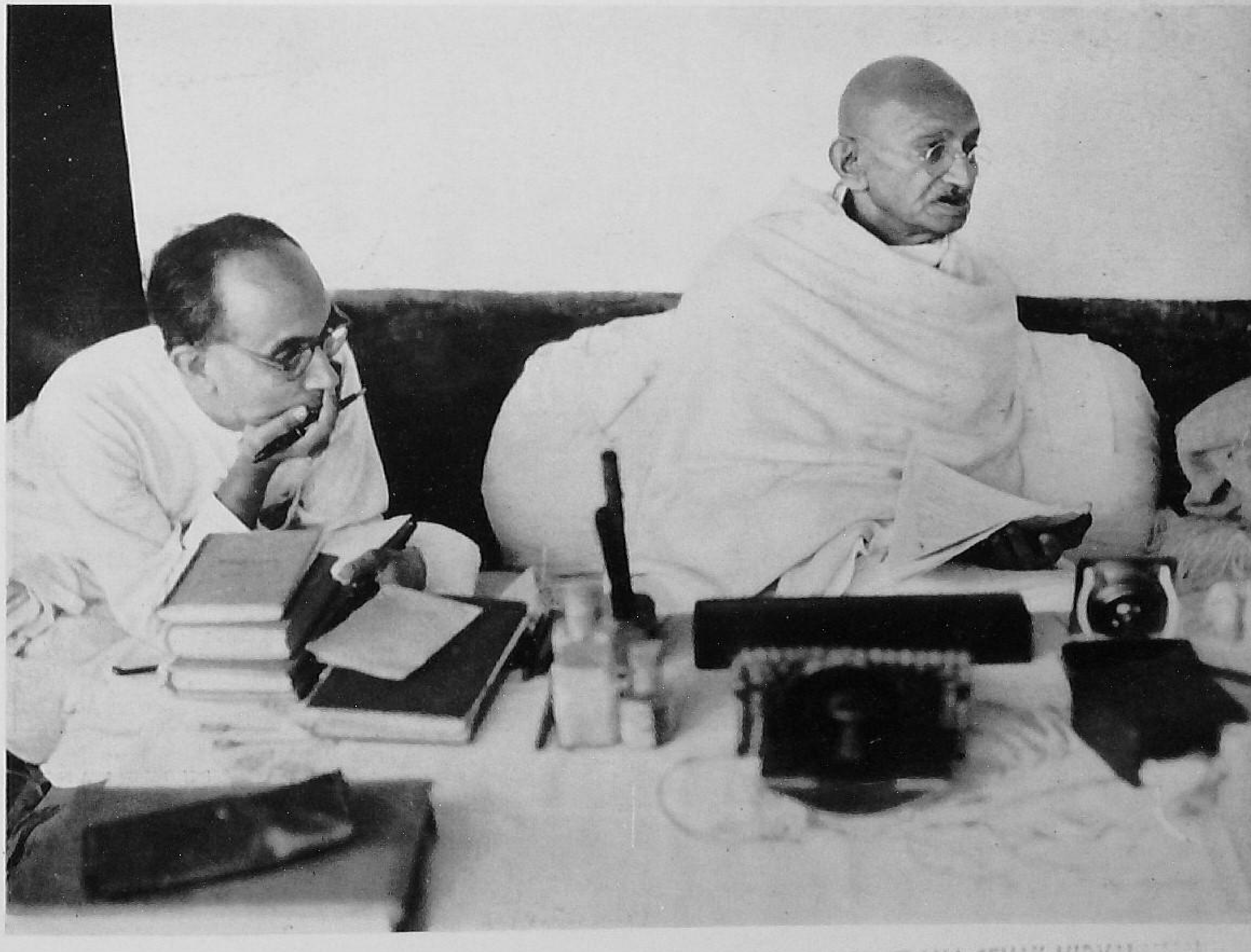


Gandhiji takes his last meal before his Rajkot fast on 3rd March, 1939. Below : At work with Shri Pyarilal during his last visit to Calcutta.



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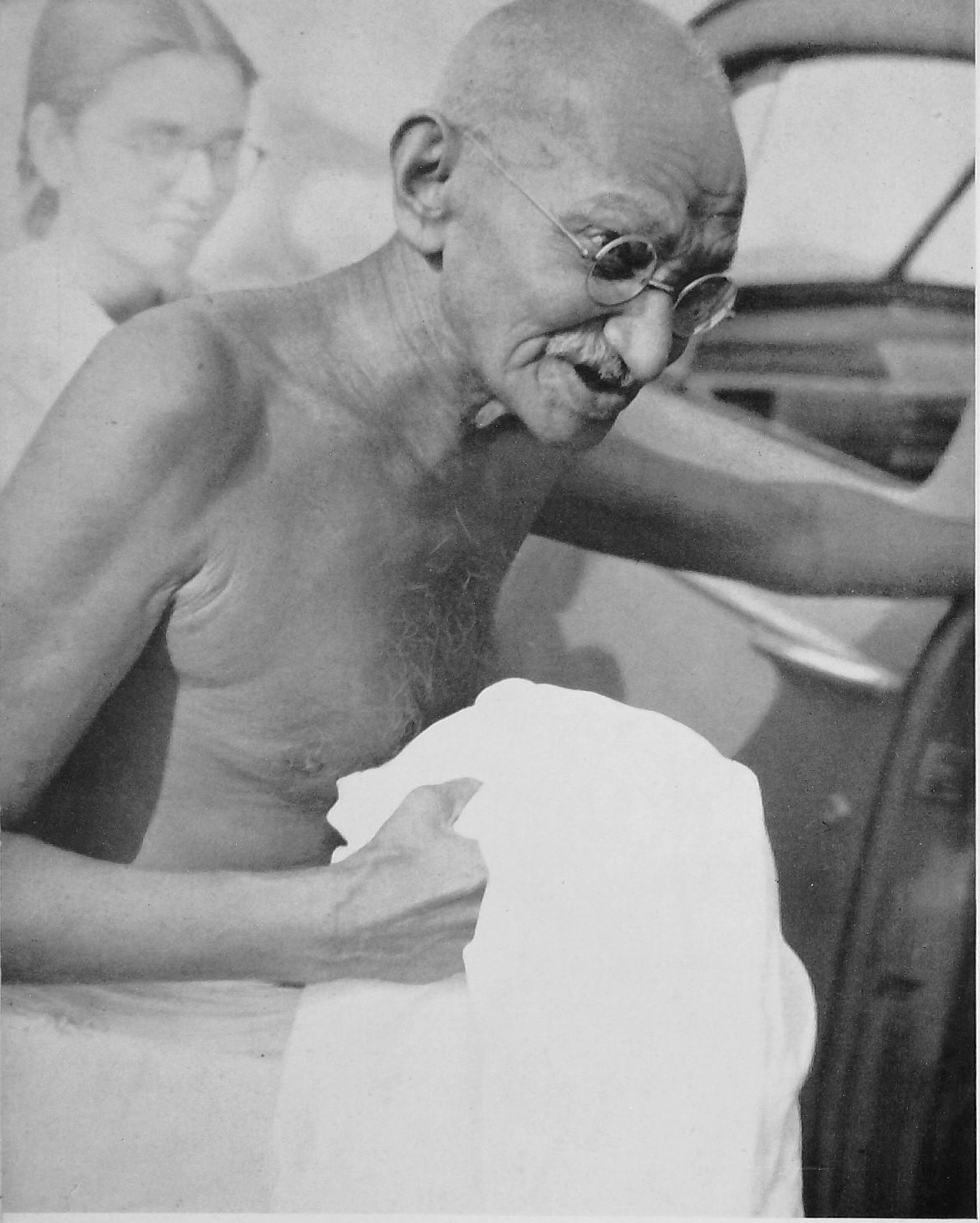

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Perhaps his mind worked in some such way, but I cannot be sure of his thoughts. He did give us the impression that there was a slightly different orientation to his thinking, and that civil disobedience, when it came, need not be stopped because of a sporadic act of violence. If, however, the violence became in any way part of the movement itself, then it ceased to be a peaceful civil disobedience movement, and its activities had to be curtailed or varied. This assurance went a long way in satisfying many of us.

The great question that hung in the air now was—how? How were we to begin? What form of civil disobedience should we take up that would be effective, suited to the circumstances, and popular with the masses? And then the Mahatma gave the hint.

Salt suddenly became a mysterious word, a word of power. The salt tax was to be attacked, the salt laws were to be broken. We were bewildered and could not quite fit in a national struggle with common salt. Another surprising development was Gandhiji's announcement of his "Eleven Points." What was the point of making a list of some political and social reforms—good in themselves, no doubt—when we were talking in terms of independence? Did Gandhiji mean the same thing when he used this term as we did, or did we speak a different language? We had no time to argue, for events were on the move. They were moving politically before our eyes from day to day in India; and, hardly realized by us at the time, they were moving fast in the world and holding it in the grip of a terrible depression. Prices were falling, and the city dwellers welcomed this as a sign of the plenty to come, but the farmer and the tenant saw the prospect with alarm.

Then came Gandhiji's correspondence with the Viceroy and the beginning of the Dandi Salt March from the ashrama at Sabarmati. As people followed the fortunes of this marching column of pilgrims from day to day, the temperature of the country went up. A meeting of the All-India Congress Committee was held at Ahmedabad to make final arrangements for the struggle that was now almost upon us. The leader in the struggle was not present, for he was already tramping with his pilgrim band to the sea. . . .

Having made our final preparations, we bade good-bye to our comrades of the All-India Congress Committee at Ahmedabad, for none knew when or how we could meet again, or whether we would meet at all. We hastened back to our posts to give the finishing touches to our local arrangements, in accordance with the new directions of the All-India Congress Committee, and, as Sarojini Naidu said, to pack up our toothbrushes for the journey to prison.

On our way back, father and I went to see Gandhiji. He was at Jambusar with his pilgrim band, and we spent a few hours with him there and then saw him stride away with his party to the next stage in the journey to salt sea. That was my last glimpse of him then as I saw him, staff in hand, marching along at the head of his followers, with firm step and a peaceful but undaunted look. It was a moving sight. . . .

The sixth of April was the first day of the National Week, which is celebrated annually in memory of the happenings in 1919, from Satyagraha Day to Jallianwala Bagh. On that day Gandhiji began the breach of the salt laws at Dandi beach, and three or four days later

permission was given to all Congress organizations to do likewise and begin civil disobedience in their own areas.

It seemed as though a spring had been suddenly released; all over the country, in town and village, salt manufacture was the topic of the day, and many curious expedients were adopted to produce salt. We knew precious little about it, and so we read it up where we could and issued leaflets giving directions; we collected pots and pans and ultimately succeeded in producing some unwholesome stuff, which we waved about in triumph and often auctioned for fancy prices. It was really immaterial whether the stuff was good or bad; the main thing was to commit a breach of the obnoxious salt law, and we were successful in that, even though the quality of our salt was poor. As we saw the abounding enthusiasm of the people and the way salt-making was spreading like a prairie fire, we felt a little abashed and ashamed for having questioned the efficacy of this method when it was first proposed by Gandhiji. And we marvelled at the amazing knack of the man to impress the multitude and make it act in an organized way. . . .

Many strange things happened in those days, but undoubtedly the most striking was the part of the women in the national struggle. They came out in large numbers from the seclusion of their homes and, though unused in public activity, threw themselves into the heart of the struggle. The picketing of foreign cloth and liquor shops they made their preserve. Enormous processions consisting of women alone were taken out in all cities; and, generally, the attiude of the women was more unyielding than that of the men. Often they became Congress 'dictators' in provinces and in local areas.

The breach of the Salt Act soon became just one activity, and civil resistance spread to other fields. This was facilitated by the

promulgation of various ordinances by the Viceroy prohibiting a number of activities. As these ordinances and prohibitions grew, the opportunities for breaking them also grew, and civil resistance took the form of doing the very things that the ordinance was intended to stop. The initiative definitely remained with the Congress and the people, and as each ordinance law failed to control the situation from the point of view of government, fresh ordinances were issued by the Viceroy. Many of the Congress Working Committee members had been arrested, but it continued to function with new members added on to it, and each official ordinance was countered by a resolution of the Working Committee giving directions as to how to meet it. . . .

Gandhiji's Fourth Arrest

Gandhiji had been arrested on May 5th. After his arrest big raids on the salt pans and depots were organized on the west coast. There were very painful incidents of police brutality during these raids. Bombay then occupied the centre of the picture with its tremendous *hartals* and processions and *lathi* charges. Several emergency hospitals grew up to treat the victims of these *lathi* charges. . . .

That year 1930 was full of dramatic situations and inspiring happenings; what surprised most was the amazing power of Gandhiji to inspire and enthuse a whole people. There was something almost hypnotic about it, and we remembered the words used by Gokhale about him: how he had the power of making heroes out of clay. Peaceful civil disobedience as a technique of action for achieving great national ends seemed to have justified itself, and a quiet confidence grew in the country, shared by friend and opponent alike, that we were marching toward victory. A strange excitement filled those who

were active in the movement, and some of this even crept inside the jail. "*Swaraj* is coming!" said the ordinary convicts; and they waited impatiently for it, in the selfish hope that it might do them some good. The warders, coming in contact with the gossip of the bazaars, also expected that Swaraj was near; the petty jail official grew a little more nervous.[14]

After the Round Table Conference

On the day and almost at the very hour of my father's death [February 6, 1931], a large group of the Indian members of the Round Table Conference landed in Bombay. Mr. Srinivasa Sastri and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and perhaps some others whom I do not remember, came direct to Allahabad. Gandhiji and some members of the Congress Working Committee were already there. There were some private meetings at our house at which an account was given of what the Round Table Conference had done. . . .

Our previous opinions were only confirmed, that the Round Table Conference decisions had not the least value. Someone then suggested —I forget who he was—that Gandhiji should write to the Viceroy and ask for an interview and have a frank talk with him. He agreed to do so, although I do not think that he expected much in the way of result.

Gandhiji always welcomed a meeting with those who disagreed with him. But it was one thing to deal with individuals on personal or minor issues; it was quite another matter to come up against an impersonal thing like the British government representing triumphant imperialism. Realizing this, Gandhiji went to the interview with Lord Irwin with no high expectation. The civil disobedience movement was

still going on, though it had toned down because there was much talk of *pourparlers* with the government.

The interview was arranged without delay, and Gandhiji went off to Delhi, telling us that if there were any serious conversations with the Viceroy regarding a provisional settlement, he would send for the members of the Working Committee. A few days later we were all summoned to Delhi. For three weeks we remained there, meeting daily and having long and exhausting discussions. Gandhiji had frequent interviews with Lord Irwin, but sometimes there was a gap of three or four days, probably because the government of India was communicating with the India Office in London. Sometimes apparently small matters or even certain words would hold up progress. One such word was "suspension" of civil disobedience. Gandhiji had all along made it clear that civil disobedience could not be finally stopped or given up, as it was the only weapon in the hands of the people. It could, however, be suspended. Lord Irwin objected to this word and wanted finality about the word, to which Gandhiji would not agree. Ultimately the word "discontinued" was used.

Delhi in Those Days

Delhi attracted in those days all manner of people. There were many foreign journalists, especially Americans, and they were somewhat annoyed with us for our reticence. They would tell us that they got much more news about the Gandhi-Irwin conversations from the New Delhi Secretariat than from us, which was a fact. Then there were many people of high degree who hurried to pay their respects to Gandhiji, for was not the Mahatma's star in the ascendant? It was very amusing to see these people, who had kept far away from

Gandhiji and the Congress and often condemned them, now hastening to make amends. The Congress seemed to have made good, and no one knew what the future might hold. Anyway, it was safer to keep on good terms with the Congress and its leaders. A year later yet another change was witnessed in them, and they were shouting again their deep abhorrence of the Congress and all its works and their utter dissociation from it.

Even the communalists were stirred by events, and sensed with some apprehension that they might not occupy a very prominent place in the coming order. And so many of them came to the Mahatma and assured him that they were perfectly willing to come to terms on the communal issue, and, if only he would take the initiative, there would be no difficulty about a settlement.

The very prosperous gentlemen who came to visit Gandhiji showed us another side of human nature, and a very adaptable side, for wherever they sensed power and success, they turned to it and welcomed it with the sunshine of their smiles. Many of them were staunch pillars of the British government in India. It was comforting to know that they would become equally staunch pillars of any other government that might flourish in India.

Often in those days I used to accompany Gandhiji in his early morning walks in New Delhi. That was usually the only time one had a chance of talking to him, for the rest of the day was cut up into little bits, each minute allotted to somebody or something. Even the early morning walk was sometimes given over to an interviewer, usually from abroad, or to a friend, come for a personal consultation. We talked of many matters, of the past, of the present, and especially of the future. I remember how he surprised me with one of his ideas

about the future of the Congress. I had imagined that the Congress, as such, would automatically cease to exist with the coming of freedom. He thought that the Congress should continue, but on one condition: that it pass a self-denying ordinance, laying it down that none of its members could accept a pay job under the state, and, if anyone wanted such a post of authority in the state, he would have to leave the Congress. I do not at present remember how he worked this out, but the whole idea underlying it was that the Congress, by its detachment and having no axe to grind, could exercise tremendous moral pressure on the executive as well as other departments of the government, and thus keep them on the right track.

Now this is an extraordinary idea which I find difficult to grasp, and innumerable difficulties present themselves. It seems to me that such an assembly, if it could be conceived, would be exploited by some vested interest. But, practicality apart, it does help one to understand a little the background of Gandhiji's thought.

Gandhiji and Democracy

Gandhiji's conception of democracy has nothing to do with numbers or majority or representation in the ordinary sense. It is based on service and sacrifice, and it uses moral pressure. He claims to be "a born democrat." "I make that claim, if complete identification with the poorest of mankind, longing to live no better than they, and a corresponding conscious effort to approach that level to the best of one's ability can entitle one to make it." This is his definition of a democrat. He says further:

> Let us recognize the fact that the Congress enjoys the prestige of a democratic character and influence not by the number of dele-

gates and visitors it has drawn to its annual function, but by an ever increasing amount of service it has rendered. Western democracy is on its trial, if it has not already proved a failure. May it be reserved to India to evolve the true science of democracy by giving a visible demonstration of its success.

Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be the inevitable products of democracy, as they undoubtedly are today. Nor is bulk a true test of democracy. True democracy is not inconsistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope, and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent. I hold that democracy cannot be evolved by forcible methods. The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without; it has to come from within.

This is certainly not western democracy, as he himself says; but, curiously enough, there is some similarity to the communist conception of democracy. A few communists will claim to represent the real needs and desires of the masses, even though the latter may themselves be unaware of them. The similarity, however, is slight and does not take us far; the differences in outlook and approach are far greater, notably in regard to methods and force.

Whether Gandhiji is a democrat or not, he does represent the peasant masses of India; he is the quintessence of the conscious and subconscious will of those millions. It is perhaps something more than representation; for he is the idealized personification of those vast millions. Of course, he is not the average peasant. A man of the keenest intellect, of fine feeling and good taste, wide vision; very human, and yet essentially the ascetic who has suppressed his passions and emotions, sublimated them and directed them in spiritual channels; a tremendous personality, drawing people to himself like a

magnet, and calling out fierce loyalties and attachments—all this so utterly unlike and beyond a peasant. And yet withal he is the greatest peasant, with a peasant's outlook on affairs, and with a peasant's blindness to some aspects of life. But India is peasant India, and so he knows his India well, reacts to her slightest tremors, gauges a situation accurately and almost instinctively, and has a knack of acting at the psychological moment.

What a problem and a puzzle he has been not only to the British government but to his own people and his closest associates! Perhaps in every other country he would be out of place today, but India still seems to understand, or at least appreciate, the prophetic-religious type of man, talking of sin and salvation and non-violence. Indian mythology is full of stories of great ascetics who, by the rigour of their sacrifices and self-imposed penance, built up a "mountain of merit" which threatened the dominion of some of the lesser gods and upset the established order. These myths have come often to my mind when I have watched the amazing energy and inner power of Gandhiji, coming out of some inexhaustible spiritual reservoir. He was obviously not of the world's ordinary coinage; he was minted of a different and rare variety, and often the unknown stared at us through his eyes.

The Impress of the Peasant

India, even urban India, even the new industrial India, had the impress of the peasant upon her; and it was natural enough for her to make this son of hers, so like her and yet so unlike, an idol and a beloved leader. He revived ancient and half-forgotten memories, and gave her glimpses of her own soul. Crushed in the dark miseries of

the present, she had tried to find relief in helpless muttering and in vague dreams of the past and the future, but he came and gave hope to her mind and strength to her much battered body, and the future became an alluring vision. Two-faced like Janus, she looked both backward into the past and forward into the future, and tried to combine the two.

Many of us had cut adrift from this peasant outlook, and the old ways of thought and custom and religion had become alien to us. We called ourselves moderns and thought in terms of "progress" and industrialization and a higher standard of living and collectivization. We considered the peasant's viewpoint reactionary; and some, a growing number, looked with favour towards socialism and communism. How came we to associate ourselves with Gandhiji politically, and to become, in many instances, his devoted followers? The question is hard to answer, and to one who does not know Gandhiji, no answer is likely to satisfy. Personality is an indefinable thing, a strange force that has power over the souls of men, and he possesses this in ample measure, and to all who come to him he often appears in a different aspect. He attracted people, but it was ultimately intellectual conviction that brought them to him and kept them there. They did not agree with his philosophy of life or even with many of his ideals. Often they did not understand him. But the action that he proposed was something tangible which could be understood and appreciated intellectually. Any action would have been welcome after the long tradition of inaction which our spineless politics had nurtured; brave and effective action with an ethical halo about it had an irresistible appeal, both to the intellect and to the emotions. Step by step he convinced us of the rightness of the action, and we went with him

although we did not accept his philosophy. To divorce action from the thought underlying it was not perhaps a proper procedure and was bound to lead to mental conflict and trouble later. Vaguely we hoped that Gandhiji, being essentially a man of action and very sensitive to changing conditions, would advance along the line that seemed to us to be right. And in any event the road he was following was the right one thus far; and, if the future meant a parting, it would be folly to anticipate it.

All this shows that we were by no means clear or certain in our minds. Always we had the feeling that, while we might be more logical, Gandhiji knew India far better than we did, and a man who could command such tremendous devotion and loyalty must have something in him that corresponded to the needs and aspirations of the masses. If we could convince him, we felt that we could also convert these masses. And it seemed possible to convince him; for, in spite of his peasant outlook, he was the born rebel, a revolutionary out for big changes, whom no fear of consequences could stop.

Gandhiji's Magic Touch

How he disciplined our lazy and demoralized people and made them work—not by force or any material inducement, but by a gentle look and a soft word and, above all, by personal example! In the early days of *Satyagraha* in India, as long ago as 1919, I remember how Umar Sobani of Bombay called him the "beloved slave driver." Much had happened in the dozen years since then. Umar had not lived to see these changes, but we who had been more fortunate looked back from those early months of 1931 with joy and elation. Nineteen-thirty had, indeed, been a wonder year for us, and Gandhiji seemed to have

changed the face of our country with his magic touch. No one was foolish enough to think that we had triumphed finally over the British government. Our feeling of elation had little to do with the government. We were proud of our people, of our womenfolk, of our youth, of our children for the part they had played in the movement. It was a spiritual gain, valuable at any time and to any people, but doubly so to us, a subject and downtrodden people. And we were anxious that nothing should happen to take this away from us.

To me, personally, Gandhiji had always shown extraordinary kindness and consideration, and my father's death had brought him particularly near to me. He had always listened patiently to whatever I had to say and had made every effort to meet my wishes. This had, indeed, led me to think that perhaps some colleagues and I could influence him continuously in a socialist direction, and he had himself said that he was prepared to go step by step as he saw his way to do so. It seemed to me almost inevitable then that he would accept the fundamental socialist position, as I saw no other way out from the violence and injustice and waste and misery of the existing order. He might disagree about the methods but not about the ideal. So I thought then, but I realize now that there are basic differences between Gandhiji's ideals and the socialist objective.

The Delhi Pact

On the night of the fourth of March we waited till midnight for Gandhiji's return from the Viceroy's house. He came back about two A.M., and we were wakened and told that an agreement had been reached.

We saw the draft. I knew most of the clauses, for they had been

often discussed, but, at the very top, Clause 2* with its reference to safeguards, etc., gave me a tremendous shock. I was wholly unprepared for it. I said nothing then, and we all retired.

There was nothing more to be said. The thing had been done, our leader had committed himself; and, even if we disagreed with him, what could we do? Throw him over? Break from him? Announce our disagreement? That might bring some personal satisfaction to an individual, but it made no difference to the final decision. The civil disobedience movement was ended for the time being at least, and not even the Working Committee could push it on now, when the government could declare that Mr. Gandhi had already agreed to a settlement. I was perfectly willing, as were our other colleagues, to suspend civil disobedience and to come to a temporary settlement with the government. It was not an easy matter for any of us to send our comrades back to jail, or to be instrumental in keeping many thousands in prison who were already there. Prison is not a pleasant place to spend our days and nights, though many of us may train ourselves for it and talk lightheartedly of its crushing routine. Besides, three weeks or more of conversations between Gandhiji and Lord Irwin had led the country to expect that a settlement was coming, and a final break would have been a disappoint-

*Clause 2 of the Delhi Settlement (dated March 5, 1931): "As regards constitutional questions, the scope of future discussion is stated, with the assent of His Majesty's Government, to be with the object of considering further the scheme for the constitutional Government of India discussed at the Round Table Conference. Of the scheme there outlined, Federation is an essential part; so also are Indian responsibility and reservations or safeguards in the interests of India, for such matters as, for instance, defence; external affairs; the position of minorities; the financial credit of India; and the discharge of obligations."

ment. So all of us in the Working Committee were decidedly in favour of a provisional settlement (for obviously it could be nothing more), provided that thereby we did not surrender any vital position.

Two matters interested me above all others. One was that our objective of independence should in no way be toned down, and the second was the effect of the settlement on our United Provinces agrarian situation. Gandhiji had made this point quite clear to Lord Irwin. The peasants were unable to pay the taxes demanded by the government. He had stated that, while the no-tax campaign would be withdrawn, we could not advise the peasantry to pay beyond their capacity.

The question of our objective, of independence, also remained. I saw in that Clause 2 of the settlement that even this seemed to be jeopardized. Was it for this that our people had behaved so gallantly for a year? Were all our brave words and deeds to end in this? The independence resolution of the Congress, the pledge of January 26, so often repeated? So I lay and pondered on that March night, and in my heart there was a great emptiness as of something precious gone, almost beyond recall.

This is the way the world ends,
Not with a bang but a whimper.

Gandhiji learned indirectly of my distress, and the next morning he asked me to accompany him in his usual walk. We had a long talk, and he tried to convince me that nothing vital had been lost, no surrender of principle made. He interpreted Clause 2 of the agreement in a particular way so as to make it fit in with our demand for

independence, relying chiefly on the words in it: "in the interests of India." The interpretation seemed to me to be a forced one, and I was not convinced, but I was somewhat soothed by his talk. The merits of the agreement apart, I told him that his way of springing surprises upon us frightened me; there was something unknown about him which, in spite of the closest association for fourteen years, I could not understand at all and which filled me with apprehension. He admitted the presence of this unknown element in him, and said that he himself could not answer for it or foretell what it might lead to.

For a day or two I wobbled, not knowing what to do. There was no question of opposing or preventing that agreement then. That stage was past, and all I could do was to dissociate myself theoretically from it, though accepting it as a matter of fact. That would have soothed my personal vanity, but how did it help the larger issue? Would it not be better to accept gracefully what had been done, and put the most favourable interpretation upon it, as Gandhiji had done? In an interview to the press immediately after the agreement he had stressed that interpretation and that we stood completely by independence. He went to Lord Irwin and made this point quite clear, so that there might be no misapprehension then or in the future. In the event of the Congress sending any representative to the Round Table Conference, he told him, it could only be on this basis and to advance this claim. Lord Irwin could not, of course, admit the claim, but he recognized the right of the Congress to advance it.

So I decided, not without great mental conflict and physical distress, to accept the agreement and work for it wholeheartedly. There appeared to me to be no middle way.

In the course of Gandhiji's interviews with Lord Irwin prior to

the agreement, as well as after, he had pleaded for the release of political prisoners other than the civil disobedience prisoners. The latter were going to be discharged as part of the agreement itself. But there were thousands of others, both those convicted after trial and detenus kept without any charge, trial, or conviction. Many of these detenus had been kept so for years, and there had always been a great deal of resentment all over India, and especially in Bengal, which was most affected, at this method of imprisonment without trial. Gandhiji had pleaded for their release, not necessarily as part of the agreement, but as eminently desirable in order to relieve political tension and establish a more normal atmosphere in Bengal. But the government was not agreeable to this. . . .

The Karachi Congress

The Karachi Congress was an even greater personal triumph for Gandhiji than any previous Congress had been. The president, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, was one of the most popular and forceful men in India with the prestige of victorious leadership in Gujrat, but it was the Mahatma who dominated the scene.

The principal resolution dealt with the Delhi Pact and the Round Table Conference. I accepted it, of course, as it emerged from the Working Committee; but, when I was asked by Gandhiji to move it in the open Congress, I hesitated. It went against the grain, and I refused at first, and then this seemed a weak and unsatisfactory position to take up. I was either for it or against it, and it was not proper to prevaricate or leave people guessing in the matter. Almost at the last moment, a few minutes before the resolution was taken up in the open Congress, I decided to sponsor it. In my speech I tried to lay

before the great gathering quite frankly what my feelings were and why I had wholeheartedly accepted that resolution and pleaded with them to accept it. That speech, made on the spur of the moment and coming from the heart, and with little of ornament or fine phrasing in it, was probably a greater success than many of my other efforts which had followed a more careful preparation. I spoke on other resolutions, too, notably on the Bhagat Singh resolution and the one on fundamental rights and economic policy. . . .

The story goes that a certain mysterious individual with communist affiliations drew up this resolution, or the greater part of it, and thrust it down upon me at Karachi; that thereupon I issued an ultimatum to Gandhiji to accept this or to face my opposition on the Delhi Pact issue, and Gandhiji accepted it as a sop to me and forced it down on a tired Subjects Committee and Congress on the concluding day.

So far as Gandhiji is concerned, I have had the privilege of knowing him pretty intimately . . . and the idea of my presenting ultimatums to him or bargaining with him seems to me monstrous. We may accommodate ourselves to each other; or we may, on a particular issue, part company; but the methods of the market place can never affect our mutual dealings.[15]

The Second Round Table Conference

Should Gandhiji go to London for the Round Table Conference or not? Again and again the question arose, and there was no definite answer. No one knew till the last moment—not even the Congress Working Committee or Gandhiji himself. For the answer depended on many things, and new happenings were constantly giving a fresh

turn to the situation. Behind that question and answer lay real and difficult problems.

We were told repeatedly, on behalf of the British Government and their friends, that the Round Table Conference had already laid down the framework of the constitution, that the principal lines of the picture had been drawn, and all that remained was the filling of this picture. But the Congress did not think so, and so far as it was concerned, the picture had to be drawn or painted from the very beginning on an almost blank canvas. It was true that by the Delhi agreement the federal basis had been approved and the idea of safeguards accepted. But a federation had long seemed to many of us the best solution of the Indian constitutional problem, and our approval of this idea did not mean our acceptance of the particular type of federation envisaged by the first Round Table Conference. A federation was perfectly compatible with political independence and social change. It was far more difficult to fit in the idea of safeguards and, ordinarily, they would mean a substantial diminution of sovereignty, but the qualifying phrase "in the interests of India" helped us to get over this difficulty to some extent at least, though not perhaps very successfully. In any event, the Karachi Congress had made it clear that an acceptable constitution must provide for full control of defence, foreign affairs, and financial and economic policy, and an examination of the question of India's indebtedness to foreign (meaning largely British) interests before liabilities were undertaken; and the fundamental rights resolution had also indicated some of the political and economic changes desired. All this was incompatible with many of the Round Table Conference decisions, as well as with the existing framework of administration in India.

The gulf between the Congress viewpoint and that of the British Government was immense, and it seemed exceedingly unlikely that it could be bridged at that stage. Very few Congressmen expected any measure of agreement between the Congress and the Government at the Round Table Conference, and even Gandhiji, optimistic as he always is, could not look forward to much. And yet he was never hopeless and was determined to try to the very end. All of us felt that whether success came or not, the effort had to be made, in continuation of the Delhi agreement. But there were two vital considerations which might have barred our participation in the second Round Table Conference. We could only go if we had full freedom to place our viewpoint in its entirety before the Round Table Conference, and were not prevented from doing so by being told that the matter had already been decided, or for any other reason. We could also be prevented from being represented at the Round Table Conference by conditions in India. A situation might have developed here which precipitated a conflict with Government, or in which we had to face severe repression. If this took place in India and our very house was on fire, it would have been singularly out of place for any representative of ours to ignore the fire and talk academically of constitutions and the like in London.

The situation was developing swiftly in India. This was noticeable all over the country, and especially so in Bengal, the United Provinces, and the Frontier Province. In Bengal the Delhi agreement had made little difference, and the tension continued and grew worse. Some civil disobedience prisoners were discharged, but thousands of politicals, who were technically not civil disobedience prisoners, remained in prison. The detenus also continued in gaol or detention

camps. Fresh arrests were frequently made for 'seditious' speeches or other political activities, and generally it was felt that the Government offensive had continued without any abatement. For the Congress, the Bengal problem has been an extraordinarily difficult one because of the existence of terrorism. Compared to the normal Congress activities and civil disobedience, these terroristic activities were, in extent and importance, very little. But they made a loud noise and attracted great attention. They also helped in making it difficult for Congress work to function as in most other provinces, for terrorism produced an atmosphere which was not favourable to peaceful direct action. Inevitably they invited the severest repression from the Government, and this fell with considerable impartiality on terrorist and non-terrorist alike.

It was difficult for the police and the local executive authorities not to make use of special laws and ordinances (meant for the terrorists) for Congressmen, labour and peasant workers and others whose activities they disapproved of. It is possible that the real offence of many of the detenus, kept now for years without charge or trial or conviction, was not terroristic activity but other effective political activity. They have been given no chance of proving or disproving anything, or even of knowing what their sins are. They are not tried in court, presumably because the police have not sufficient evidence against them to secure a conviction, although it is well known that the British-Indian laws for offences against the State are amazingly thorough and comprehensive, and it is difficult to escape from their close meshes. It often happens that a person is acquitted by the law courts and is immediately arrested again and thereafter treated as a detenu.

The Congress Working Committee felt very helpless before this intricate problem of Bengal. They were continually oppressed by it; and some Bengal matter was always coming up before them in different forms. They dealt with it as best they could, but they knew well that they were not really tackling the problem. So, rather weakly, they simply allowed maters to drift there; it is a little difficult to say what else they could have done, placed as they were. This attitude of the Working Committee was much resented in Bengal, and an impression grew up there that the Congress executive, as well as the other provinces, were ignoring Bengal. In the hour of her trial Bengal seemed to be deserted. This impression was entirely wrong, for the whole of India was full of sympathy for the people of Bengal, but it did not know how to translate this sympathy into effective help. And, besides, every part of India had to face its own troubles.

In the United Provinces the agrarian situation was becoming worse. The Provincial Government temporised with the problem and delayed a decision about rent and revenue remissions, and forcible collections were begun. There were wholesale ejectments and attachments. While we were in Ceylon there had taken place two or three agrarian riots when forcible attempts were made to collect rents. The riots were petty in themselves, but unhappily they resulted in the death of the landlord or his agent. Gandhiji had gone to Naini Tal (also when I was in Ceylon) to discuss the agrarian situation with the Governor of the U.P., Sir Malcolm Hailey, without much result. When the Government announced its remissions, they fell far short of expectations, and in the rural areas there was a continuous and an evergrowing uproar. As the pressure of landlord plus government grew on the peasantry, and thousands of tenants were ejected from their

holdings and had their little property seized, a situation developed which in most other countries would have resulted in a big peasant rising. I think it was very largely due to the efforts of the Congress which kept the tenants from indulging in violent activity. But there was an abundance of violence against them.

There was one bright side to this agrarian upheaval and distress. Owing to the very low prices of agricultural produce, the poorer classes, including the peasants, unless they were dispossessed, had more to eat than they had had for a long time.

In the Frontier Province, as in Bengal, the Delhi Pact brought no peace. There was a permanent state of tension there, and government was a military affair, with special laws and ordinances and heavy punishments for trivial offences. To oppose this state of affairs, Abdul Ghaffar Khan led a great agitation, and he soon became a bugbear to the Government. From village to village he went striding along, carrying his six-feet-three of Pathan manhood, and establishing centres of the 'Redshirts'. Wherever he or his principal lieutenants went, they left a trail of their 'Redshirts' behind, and the whole province was soon covered by branches of the 'Khudai Khidmatgar'. They were thoroughly peaceful and, in spite of vague allegations, not a single definite charge of violence against them has been established. But whether they were peaceful or not, they had the tradition of war and violence behind them, and they lived near the turbulent frontier, and this rapid growth of a disciplined movement, closely allied to the Indian national movement, thoroughly upset the Government. I do not suppose they ever believed in its professions of peace and non-violence. But even if they had done so, their reactions to it would only have been of fright and annoyance. It represented too much of

actual and potential power for them to view it with equanimity.

Of this great movement the unquestioned head was Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan—'Fakhr-e-Afghan', 'Fakr-e-Pathan', the 'Pride of the Pathans', 'Gandhi-e-Sarhad', the 'Frontier Gandhi', as he came to be known. He had attained an amazing popularity in the Frontier Province by sheer dint of quiet, persevering working, undaunted by difficulties or Government action. He was, and is, no politician as politicians go; he knows nothing of the tactics and manœuvres of politics. A tall, straight man, straight in body and mind, hating fuss and too much talk, looking forward to freedom for his Frontier Province people within the framework of Indian freedom, but vague about and uninterested in, constitutions and legal talk. Action was necessary to achieve anything, and Mahatma Gandhi had taught a remarkable way of peaceful action which appealed to him. For action, organization was necessary; therefore, without further argument or much drafting of rules for his organization, he started organizing—and with remarkable success.

He was especially attracted to Gandhiji. At first his shyness and desire to keep in the background made him keep away from him. Later they had to meet to discuss various matters, and their contacts grew. It was surprising how this Pathan accepted the idea of non-violence, far more so in theory than many of us. And it was because he believed in it that he managed to impress his people with the importance of remaining peaceful in spite of provocation. It would be absurd to say that the people of the Frontier Province have given up all thoughts of ever indulging in violence, just as it would be absurd to say this of the people generally in any province. The masses are moved by waves of emotion, and no one can predict what they

might do when so moved. But the self-discipline that the frontier people showed in 1930 and subsequent years has been something amazing. . . .

The frontier 'Redshirts' co-operated with the Congress, but they were an organization apart. It was a peculiar position. The real connecting link was Abdul Ghaffar Khan. This question was fully considered by the Working Committee in consultation with the Frontier Province leaders in the summer of 1931, and it was decided to absorb the 'Redshirts' into the Congress. The 'Redshirt' movement thus became part of the Congress organization.

It was Gandhiji's wish to go to the Frontier Province immediately after the Karachi Congress, but the Government did not encourage this at all. Repeatedly, in later months, when Government officials complained of the doings of the 'Redshirts', he pressed to be allowed to go there to find out for himself, but to no purpose. Nor was my going there approved. In view of the Delhi agreement, it was not considered desirable by us to enter the Frontier Province against the declared wish of the Government.

Yet another of the problems before the Working Committee was the communal problem. There was nothing new about this, although it had a way of reappearing in novel and fantastic attire. The Round Table Conference gave it an added importance at the time, as it was obvious that the British Government would keep it in the forefront and subordinate all other issues to it. The members of the Conference, all nominees of the Government, had been mainly chosen in order to give importance to the communal and sectional interests, and to lay stress on these divergences rather than on the common interests. The Government had even refused, pointedly and aggressively, to

nominate any leader of the Nationalist Muslims. Gandhiji felt that if the Conference, at the instance of the British Government, became entangled in the communal issue right at the beginning, the real political and economic issues would not get proper consideration. Under these circumstances, his going to the Conference would be of little use. He put it to the Working Committee, therefore, that he should only go to London if some understanding on the communal issue was previously arrived at between the parties concerned. His instinct was perfectly justified, but nevertheless the Committee overruled him and decided that he must not refuse to go merely on the ground that we had failed to solve the communal problem. An attempt was made by the Committee, in consultation with representatives of various communities, to put forward a proposed solution. This had no great success.

These were some of the major problems before us during that summer of 1931, besides a large number of minor issues. From all over the country we were continually receiving complaints from local Congress Committees pointing out breaches of the Delhi Pact by local officials. The more important of these were forwarded by us to the Government, which, in its turn, brought charges against Congressmen of violation of the Pact. So charges and counter-charges were made, and later they were published in the Press. Needless to say, this did not result in the improvement of the relations between the Congress and the Government.

And yet this friction on petty matters was by itself of no great importance. Its importance lay in its revealing the development of a more fundamental conflict, something which did not depend on individuals but arose from the very nature of our national struggle

and the want of equilibrium of our agrarian economy, something that could not be liquidated or compromised away without a basic change. Our national movement had originally begun because of the desire of our upper middle classes to find means of self-expression and self-growth, and behind it there was the political and economic urge. It spread to the lower middle classes and became a power in the land; and then it began to stir the rural masses who were finding it more and more difficult to keep up, as a whole, even their miserable rock-bottom standard of living. The old self-sufficient village economy had long ceased to exist. Auxiliary cottage industries, ancillary to agriculture, which had relieved somewhat the burden on the land, had died off, partly because of State policy, but largely because they could not compete with the rising machine industry. The burden on land grew and the growth of Indian industry was too slow to make much difference to this. Ill-equipped and almost unawares, the overburdened village was thrown into the world market and was tossed about hither and thither. It could not compete on even terms. It was backward in its methods of production, and its land system, resulting in a progressive fragmentation of holdings, made radical improvement impossible. So the agricultural classes, both landlords and tenants, went downhill, except during brief periods of boom. The landlords tried to pass on the burden to their tenantry, and the growing pauperization of the peasantry—both the petty landholders and the tenants—drew them to the national movement. The agricultural proletariat, the large numbers of landless labourers in rural areas, were also attracted; and for all these rural classes 'nationalism' or 'swaraj' meant fundamental changes in the land system, which would relieve or lessen their burdens and provide land for the landless. These desires found no

clear expression either in the peasantry or in the middle-class leaders of the national movement.

The Civil Disobedience movement of 1930 happened to fit in unbeknown to its own leaders at first, with the great world slump in industry and agriculture. The rural masses were powerfully affected by this slump, and they turned to the Congress and civil disobedience. For them it was not a matter of a fine constitution drawn up in London or elsewhere, but of a basic change in the land system, especially in the zamindari areas. The zamindari system, indeed, seemed to have outlived its day and had no stability left in it. But the British Government, situated as it was, could not venture to undertake a radical change of this land system. Even when it had appointed the Royal Agricultural Commission, the terms of reference to it barred a discussion of the question of ownership of land or the system of land tenure.

Thus the conflict lay in the very nature of things in India then, and it could not be charmed away by phrases or compromises. Only a solution of the basic problem of land (not to mention other vital national issues) could resolve that conflict. And of this solution through the instrumentality of the British Government there was no possibility. Temporary measures might alleviate the distress for a while; severe repression might frighten and prevent public expression of it; but neither helped in the solution of the problem.

The British Government, like most governments I suppose, has an idea that much of the trouble in India is due to 'agitators'. It is a singularly inept notion. India has had a great leader during the past fifteen years who has won the affection and even adoration of her millions, and has seemed to impose his will on her in many ways. He

has played a vitally important part in her recent history, and yet more important than he were the people themselves who seemed to follow blindly his behests. The people were the principal actors, and behind them, pushing them on, were great historical urges which prepared them and made them ready to listen to their leader's piping. But for that historical setting and political and social urges, no leaders or agitators could have inspired them to action. It was Gandhiji's chief virtue as a leader that he could instinctively feel the pulse of the people and know when conditions were ripe for growth and action.

In 1930 the national movement in India fitted in for a while with the growing social forces of the country, and because of this a great power came to it, a sense of reality, as if it was indeed marching step by step with history. The Congress represented that national movement, and this power and strength were reflected in the growth of Congress prestige. This was something vague, incalculable, indefinable, but nevertheless very much present. The peasantry, of course, turned to the Congress and gave it its real strength; the lower middle-class formed the backbone of its fighting ranks. Even the upper *bourgeoisie*, troubled by this new atmosphere, thought it safer to be friendly with the Congress. The great majority of the textile mills in India signed undertakings prescribed by the Congress, and were afraid of doing things which might bring on them the displeasure of the Congress. While people argued fine legal points in London at the first R.T.C., the reality of power seemed to be slowly and imperceptibly flowing towards the Congress as representing the people. This illusion grew even after the Delhi Pact, not because of vainglorious speeches, but because of the events of 1930 and after. Indeed, probably the persons who were most conscious of the difficulties and dangers ahead were

the Congress leaders, and they took every care not to minimize them.

This vague sense of a dual authority growing in the country was naturally most irritating to the Government. It had no real basis in fact, as physical power rested completely with the authorities, but that it existed psychologically there was no doubt. For an authoritarian, irremovable government this was an impossible situation, and it was this subtle atmosphere that really got on their nerves, and not a few odd village speeches or processions of which they complained later. A clash, therefore, seemed inevitable; for the Congress could hardly commit voluntary *hara-kiri,* and the Government could not tolerate this atmosphere of duality, and was bent on crushing the Congress. This clash was deferred because of the second Round Table Conference. For some reason or other the British Government was very keen on having Gandhiji in London, and avoided, as far as possible, doing anything to prevent this.

And yet the sense of conflict grew, and we could feel the hardening on the side of Government. Soon after the Delhi Pact, Lord Irwin had left India and Lord Willingdon had come in his place as Viceroy. A legend grew up that the new Viceroy was a hard and stern person and not so amenable to compromise as his predecessor. Many of our politicians have inherited a 'liberal' habit of thinking of politics in terms of persons rather than principles. They do not realize that the broad imperial policy of the British Government does not depend on the personal views of the Viceroys. The change of Viceroys, therefore, did not and could not make any difference, but, as it happened, the policy of Government gradually changed owing to the development of the situation. The Civil Service hierarchy had not approved of pacts and dealings with the Congress; all their training and authoritarian

conceptions of government were opposed to this. They had an idea that they had added to the Congress influence and Gandhiji's prestige by dealing with him almost as an equal and it was about time that he was brought down a peg or two. The notion was a very foolish one, but then the Indian Civil Service is not known for the originality of its conceptions. Whatever the reason, the Government stiffened its back and tightened its hold, and it seemed to tell us, in the words of the old prophet: My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. Whereas he chastised you with whips, I will chastise you with scorpions.

But the time for chastisement was not yet. If possible the Congress was to be represented at the second Round Table Conference. Twice Gandhiji went to Simla to have long conversations with the Viceroy and other officials. They discussed many of the points at issue, especially the 'Redshirt' movement in the Frontier and U.P. Agrarian situation, the two problems, apart from Bengal, which seemed to be worrying the Government most.

Gandhiji had sent for me from Simla, and I had occasion to meet some of the Government of India officials also. My talks were limited to the U.P. They were frank talks, and the real conflicts, which lay behind the petty charges and counter-charges, were discussed. I remember being told that the Government had been in a position in February 1931 to crush the Civil Disobedience movement absolutely within three months at the most. They had perfected their machinery of repression and only a push had to be given to it; a button pressed. But preferring, if possible, a settlement by agreement to one imposed by force, they had decided to try the experiment of mutual talks which had led to the Delhi agreement. If the agreement had not come off,

the button was always there, and could have been pressed at a moment's notice. And there seemed to be a hint that the button might have to be pressed in the not distant future if we did not behave. It was all said very courteously and very frankly, and both of us knew that, quite apart from us and whatever we might say or do, conflict was inevitable.

Another high official paid a compliment to the Congress. We were for the moment discussing wider problems of a non-political nature, and he told me that, politics apart, the Congress had done a great service to India. The usual charge brought against Indians was that they were not good organizers, but during 1930 the Congress had done a wonderful bit of organizing, despite enormous difficulties and opposition.

Gandhiji's first visit to Simla was inconclusive in so far as the question of going to the Round Table Conference was concerned. The second visit took place in the last week of August. A final decision had to be taken one way or the other, but still he found it difficult to make up his mind to leave India. In Bengal, in the Frontier Province, and in the U.P., he saw trouble ahead, and he did not want to go unless he had some assurance of peace in India. At last some kind of an agreement was arrived at with the Government embodied in a statement and some letters that were exchanged. This was done at the very last moment to enable him to travel by the liner that was carrying the delegates to the R.T.C. Indeed, it was after the last moment, in a sense, as the last train had gone. A special train from Simla to Kalka was arranged, and other trains were delayed to make the connections. . . .

I remember reading, just on the eve of Gandhiji's departure for Europe in 1931, an article by a well-known Paris correspondent (at the time) of a London newspaper. The article was about India, and in the course of it he referred to an incident which, according to him, took place in 1921 during the non-co-operation days when the Prince of Wales visited India. It was stated that in some place (probably it was Delhi) Mahatma Gandhi burst in dramatically and unannounced on the Prince, fell on his knees, clasped the Prince's feet and, weeping copiously, begged him to give peace to this unhappy land. None of us, not even Gandhiji, had heard of this remarkable story, and I wrote to the journalist pointing this out to him. He expressed regret, but added that he had got it from a reliable source. What astonished me was that he should have given credence, without any attempt at an enquiry, to a story on the face of it highly improbable, and which no one who knew anything about Gandhiji, the Congress, or India could believe. It is, unhappily, true that there are many Englishmen in India who, in spite of long residence, know nothing about the country or about the Congress or about Gandhiji. The story was an incredible and ridiculous one, comparable perhaps to a fanciful account of the Archbishop of Canterbury suddenly bursting in upon Mussolini, standing on his head, and waving his legs in the air in token of greeting.

A recent report in a newspaper gives another type of story. It is stated that Gandhiji has got huge funds, running into millions of pounds, secretly deposited with friends, and the Congress is after this money. It (the Congress) is afraid that if Gandhiji retires from its

membership it might lose these hoards. The story is on the face of it absurd, for he never keeps funds personally or secretly, and whatever he has collected he hands over to a public organization. He has the *bania*'s instinct for careful accounting, and all his collections are publicly audited.

This rumour is probably based on the story of the famous crore of rupees which were collected by the Congress in 1921. This sum, which sounds big but was not much if spread out all over India, was utilized for national universities and schools, promotion of cottage industries and especially khaddar, untouchability work and a variety of other constructive schemes. Much of it was tied up in ear-marked funds, which still exist, and are used for their special purposes. The rest of the collections were left with the local committees, and spent for Congress organizational and political work. The non-co-operation movement was financed by it, as well as Congress work for a few years after. We have been taught by Gandhiji, as well as by the poverty of the country, to carry on our political movement with exceedingly limited means. Most of our work has been wholly voluntary, and where payment has been made it has been on a starvation scale. The best of our workers, university graduates with families to support, have been paid less than the unemployment allowance in England. I doubt if any political or labour movement on a large scale has been run anywhere with so little money as the Congress movement during the last fifteen years. And all Congress funds and accounts have been publicly audited from year to year, no part of them being secret, except during the civil disobedience periods, when the Congress was an illegal organization.

Gandhiji had gone to London as the sole representative of the Congress to the Round Table Conference. We had decided, after long debate, not to have additional representatives. Partly this was due to our desire to have our best men in India at a very critical time, when the most tactful handling of the situation was necessary. We felt that, in spite of the R.T.C. meeting in London, the centre of gravity lay in India, and developments in India would inevitably have their reactions in London. We wanted to check untoward developments, and to keep our organization in proper condition. This was, however, not the real reason for our sending only one representative. If we had thought it necessary and advisable, we would certainly have sent others also. Deliberately we refrained from doing so.

We were not joining the Round Table Conference to talk interminably about the petty details of a constitution. We were not interested in those details at that stage, and they could only be considered when some agreement on fundamental matters had been arrived at with the British Government. The real question was how much power was to be transferred to a democratic India. Any solicitor almost could do the drafting and the settlement of details afterwards. The Congress position was a fairly simple one on these basic matters, and there was no great room for argument over it. It seemed to us that the dignified course would be for one representative, and that one our leader, to go and explain that position, to show the essential reasonableness of it and the inevitability of it, and to try to win over, if he could, the British Government to it. That was very difficult, we knew; hardly possible as matters stood then, but then

we had no other alternative. We could not give up that position and our principles and ideals, to which we were pledged and in which we firmly believed. If by a strange chance a basis of agreement was found on those fundamentals, the rest followed easily enough. Indeed, it had been settled between us that, in case of such an agreement, Gandhiji would immediately summon to London some or even all the members of the Working Committee, so that we could then share the work of detailed negotiation. We were to keep ourselves in readiness for that summons, and even travel by air if necessary. We could thus be with him within ten days of the call.

But if there was no initial agreement on fundamentals, then the question of further and detailed negotiations did not arise, nor was it necessary for additional Congress representatives to go to the R.T.C. So we decided to send Gandhiji only. One other member of the Working Committee, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, also attended the R.T.C., but she did not do so as a Congress representative. She was invited as a representative of Indian womanhood, and the Working Committee permitted her to go as such.

The British Government had, however, no intention of falling in with our wishes in the matter. Their policy was to postpone the consideration of fundamental questions and to make the Conference exhaust itself, more or less, on minor and immaterial matters. Even when major matters were considered, the Government held its hand, refused to commit itself, and promised to express its opinion after mature consideration later on. Their trump card was, of course, the communal issue and they played it for all it was worth. It dominated the Conference.

The great majority of the Indian members of the Conference

fell in, most of them willingly, some unwillingly, with this official manœuvring. They were a motley assembly. Few of them represented any but themselves. Some were able and respected; of many others this could not be said. As a whole they represented, politically and socially, the most reactionary elements in India. So backward and reactionary were they that the Indian Liberals, so very moderate and cautious in India, shone as progressives in their company. They represented groups of vested interests in India who were tied up with British imperialism, and looked to it for advancement or protection. The most prominent representation came from various 'minority' and 'majority' groups on the communal issue. This consisted of a number of upper-class irreconcilables who, it was notorious, could never agree amongst themselves. Politically they were thorough reactionaries, and their sole interest seemed to be to gain a communal advantage, even though that might involve a surrender of political advance. Indeed they proclaimed that they would not agree to having any greater measure of political freedom unless and until their communal demands were satisfied. That was an extraordinary sight, and it revealed with painful clarity the depths to which a subject people could fall, and how they could be made pawns in the imperialist game. It was true that the Indian people could not be said to be represented by that crowd of highnesses, lords, knights and others of high degree. The members of the Round Table Conference had been nominated by the British Government, and, from its own point of view, the Government had chosen well. And yet the mere fact that the British authorities could use and exploit us so, showed the weakness of our people, and the strange facility with which they could be side-tracked and made to undo each other's efforts. Our upper classes were still

wrapped up in the ideology of our imperialist rulers, and played their game. Was it because they did not see through it? Or did they, knowing its real significance, accept it knowingly because of their fear of democracy and freedom in India?

It was fitting that in this assembly of vested interests—imperialist, feudal, financial, industrial, religious, communal—the leadership of the British Indian delegation should usually fall to the Aga Khan, who in his own person happened to combine all these interests in some degree. Closely associated as he has been with British imperialism and the British ruling class for over a generation, residing chiefly in England, he could thoroughly appreciate and represent our rulers' interests and viewpoint. He would have been an able representative of Imperialist England at that Round Table Conference. The irony of it was that he was supposed to represent India.

The scales were terribly loaded against us at that Conference and, little as we expected from it, we watched its proceedings with amazement and ever-growing disgust. We saw the pitiful and absurdly inadequate attempts to scratch the surface of national and economic problems, the pacts and intrigues and manœuvres, the joining of hands of some of our own countrymen with the most reactionary elements of the British Conservative Party, the endless talk over petty issues, the deliberate shelving of all that really mattered, the continuous playing into the hands of the big vested interests and especially British imperialism, the mutual squabbles, varied by feasting and mutual admiration. It was all jobbery—big jobs, little jobs, jobs and seats for the Hindus, for the Muslims, for the Sikhs, for the Anglo-Indians, for the Europeans; but all jobs for the upper classes, the masses had no look-in. Opportunism was rampant, and different

groups seemed to prowl about like hungry wolves waiting for their prey—the spoils under the new constitution. The very conception of freedom had taken the form of large-scale jobbery—'indianization' it was called—more jobs for Indians in the army, in the civil services, etc. No one thought in terms of independence, of real freedom, of a transfer of power to a democratic India, of the solution of any of the vital and urgent economic problems facing the Indian people. Was it for this that India had struggled so manfully? Must we exchange this murky air for the rare atmosphere of fine idealism and sacrifice?

In that gilded and crowded hall Gandhiji sat, a very lonely figure. His dress, or absence of it, distinguished him from all others, but there was an even vaster difference between his thought and outlook and that of the well-dressed folk around him. His was an extraordinarily difficult position in that Conference, and we wondered from afar how he could tolerate it. But with amazing patience he carried on, and made attempt after attempt to find some basis of agreement. One characteristic gesture he made, which suddenly showed up how communalism really covered political reaction. He did not like many of the communal demands put forward on behalf of the Muslim delegates to the Conference; he thought, and his own Muslim Nationalist colleagues thought so, that some of these demands were a bar to freedom and democracy. But still he offered to accept the whole lot of them, without question or argument, if the Muslim delegates there joined forces with him and the Congress on the political issue, that is, on independence.

That offer was a personal offer because he could not, situated as he was, bind down the Congress. But he promised to urge Congress to agree to it, and no one who knew his position in the Congress could

doubt that he would succeed in getting Congress approval. The offer, however, was not accepted, and indeed it is a little difficult to imagine the Aga Khan standing for Indian independence. This demonstrated that the real trouble was not communal, although the communal issue loomed large before the Conference. It was political reaction that barred all progress and sheltered itself behind the communal issue. By careful selection of its nominees for the Conference, the British Government had collected these reactionary elements, and by controlling the procedure, they had made the communal issue the major issue, and an issue on which no agreement was possible between the irreconcilables gathered there.

The British Government succeeded in its endeavour, and thereby demonstrated that it still has, not only the physical strength to uphold its Empire, but also the cunning and statecraft to carry on the imperial tradition for a while longer. The people of India failed, although the Round Table Conference neither represented them nor was it a measure of their strength. They failed because they had no ideological background of what they were striving for, and could be easily misled and side-tracked. They failed because they did not feel themselves strong enough to discard the vested interests that encumbered their progress. They failed because of an excess of religiosity, and the ease with which communal feelings could be roused. They failed, in short, because they were not advanced enough and strong enough to succeed.

There was no question of failure or success at this Round Table Conference itself. Little was expected of it, and yet it made a difference. The previous conference, the first of its kind, had attracted very little attention in India or elsewhere for the Civil Disobedience move-

ment absorbed attention. The nominees of the British Government who went to the Conference of 1930 often went to the accompaniment of black flags and uncomplimentary slogans. But in 1931 all was different because Gandhiji went as the representative of the Congress, and as a leader whom millions followed. This gave prestige to the Conference, and India followed its career with far greater interest: and any failure, whatever the cause, redounded now to the discredit of India. We understood then why the British Government had attached so much importance to Gandhiji's participation in it.

The Conference itself, with all its scheming and opportunism and futile meandering, was no failure for India. It was constituted so as to fail, and the people of India could hardly be made responsible for its failing. But it succeeded in diverting world attention from real issues in India, and, in India itself, it produced disillusion and depression and a sense of humiliation. It gave a handle to reactionary forces to raise their heads again.

Success or failure was to come to the people of the country by events in India itself. The powerful nationalist movement could not fade away, because of distant manœuvring in London. Nationalism represented a real and immediate need of the middle classes and peasantry, and by its means they sought to solve their problems. The movement could thus either succeed, fulfil its function, and give place to some other movement, which would carry the people further on the road to progress and freedom, or else it could be forcibly suppressed for the time being. That struggle was to come in India soon after, and was to result in temporary disablement. The second Round Table Conference could not affect this struggle much, but it did create an atmosphere somewhat unfavourable to it.[16]

4

The Magic of a Fast

Our peaceful and monotonous routine in jail was suddenly upset in the middle of September 1932 by a bombshell. News came that Gandhiji had decided to "fast unto death" in disapproval of the separate electorates given by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's communal award to the depressed classes. What a capacity he had to give shocks to people! Suddenly all manner of ideas rushed into my head; all kinds of possibilities and contingencies rose up before me and upset my equilibrium completely. For two days I was in darkness with no light to show the way out, my heart sinking when I thought of some results of Gandhiji's action. The personal aspect was powerful enough, and I thought with anguish that I might not see him again. It was over a year ago that I had seen him last on board ship on the way to England. Was that going to be my last sight of him?

And then I felt annoyed with him for choosing a side issue for his final sacrifice. What would be the result on our freedom movement? Would not the larger issues fade into the background, for the time being at least? And, if he attained his immediate object and got a joint electorate for the depressed classes, would not that result in a reaction and a feeling that something had been achieved and nothing

more need be done for a while? And was not his action a recognition, and in part an acceptance, of the communal award and the general scheme of things as sponsored by the government? Was this consistent with non-co-operation and civil disobedience? After so much sacrifice and brave endeavour, was our movement to tail off into something insignificant?

I felt angry with him at his religious and sentimental approach to a political question, and his frequent references to God in connection with it. He even seemed to suggest that God had indicated the very date of the fast. What a terrible example to set!

If Bapu died! What would India be like then? And how would her politics run? There seemed to be a dreary and dismal future ahead, and despair seized my heart when I thought of it.

So I thought and thought, while confusion reigned in my head, with anger and hopelessness, and love for him who was the cause of this upheaval. I hardly knew what to do, and I was irritable and short-tempered with everybody, most of all with myself.

And then a strange thing happened to me. I had quite an emotional crisis, and at the end of it I felt calmer, and the future seemed not so dark. Bapu had a curious knack of doing the right thing at the psychological moment, and it might be that his action—impossible to justify as it was from my point of view—would lead to great results, not only in the narrow field in which it was confined, but in the wider aspects of our national struggle. And, even if Bapu died, our struggle for freedom would go on. So whatever happened, one had to keep ready and fit for it. Having made up my mind to face even Gandhiji's death without flinching, I felt calm and collected and ready to face the world and all it might offer.

Then came news of the tremendous upheaval all over the country, a magic wave of enthusiasm running through Hindu society, and untouchability appeared to be doomed. What a magician, I thought, was this little man sitting in Yeravda Prison, and how well he knew how to pull the strings that move people's hearts!

A telegram from him reached me. It was the first message I had received from him since my conviction, and it did me good to hear from him after that long interval. In this telegram he said:

During all these days of agony you have been before mind's eye. I am most anxious to know your opinion. You know how I value youi opinion. Saw Indu [and] Swarup's children. Indu looked happy and in possession of more flesh. Doing very well. Wire reply. Love.

It was extraordinary, and yet it was characteristic of him, that in the agony of his fast and in the midst of his many preoccupations, he should refer to the visit of my daughter and my sister's children to him, and even mention that Indira had put on flesh! (My sister was also in prison then and all these children were at school in Poona.) He never forgets the seemingly little things in life which really mean so much.

News also came to me just then that some settlement had been reached over the electorate issue. The superintendent of the jail was good enough to allow me to send an answer to Gandhiji and I sent him the following telegram:

Your telegram and brief news that some settlement reached filled me with relief and joy. First news of your decision to fast caused mental agony and confusion, but ultimately optimism triumphed and I regained peace of mind. No sacrifice too great for suppressed downtrodden classes. Freedom must be judged by freedom of lowest but

feel danger of other issues obscuring only goal. Am unable to judge from religious viewpoint. Danger your methods being exploited by others but how can I presume to advise a magician. Love.

The Harijan Movement

A "pact" was signed by various people gathered in Poona; with unusual speed the British Prime Minister accepted it and varied his previous award accordingly, and the fast was broken. I disliked such pacts and agreements greatly, but I welcomed the Poona Pact apart from its contents.

The excitement was over, and we reverted to our jail routine. News of the Harijan movement and of Gandhiji's activities from prison came to us, and I was not very happy about it. There was no doubt that a tremendous push had been given to the movement to end untouchability and raise the unhappy depressed classes, not so much by the pact as by the crusading enthusiasm created all over the country. That was to be welcomed. But it was equally obvious that civil disobedience had suffered. The country's attention had been diverted to other issues, and many Congress workers had turned to the Harijan cause. Probably most of these people wanted an excuse to revert to safer activities which did not involve the risk of jail-going or, worse still, lathi blows and confiscations of property. That was natural, and it was not fair to expect all the thousands of our workers to keep always ready for intense suffering and the break-up and destruction of their homes. But still it was painful to watch this slow decay of our great movement. Civil disobedience was, however, still going on, and occasionally there were mass demonstrations like the Calcutta Congress in March-April 1933. Gandhiji was in Yeravda Prison, but

he had been given certain privileges to meet people and issue directions for the Harijan movements. Somehow this took away from the sting of his being in prison. All this depressed me.

The Twenty-one-day Fast

Many months later, early in May 1933, Gandhiji began his twenty-one-day fast. The first news of this had again come as a shock to me, but I accepted it as an inevitable occurrence and schooled myself to it. Indeed I was irritated that people should urge him to give it up, after he had made up his mind and declared it to the public. For me the fast was an incomprehensible thing, and if I had been asked before the decision had been taken, I would certainly have spoken strongly against it. But I attached great value to Gandhiji's word, and it seemed to me wrong for anyone to try to make him break it, in a personal matter which, to him, was of supreme importance. So, unhappy as I was, I put up with it.

A few days before beginning his fast he wrote to me a typical letter which moved me very much. As he asked for a reply I sent him the following telegram:

Your letter. What can I say about matters I do not understand? I feel lost in strange country where you are the only familiar landmark and I try to grope my way in the dark but I stumble. Whatever happens my love and thoughts will be with you.

I had struggled against my utter disapproval of his act and my desire not to hurt him. I felt, however, that I had not sent him a cheerful message, and now that he was bent on undergoing his terrible ordeal, which might even end in his death, I ought to cheer him up as much as I could. Little things make a difference psychologically, and

he would have to strain every nerve to survive. I felt also that we should accept whatever happened, even his death, if unhappily it should occur, with a stout heart. So I sent him another telegram:

Now that you are launched on your great enterprise may I send you again love and greetings and assure you that I feel more clearly now that whatever happens it is well and whatever happens you win.

He survived the fast. On the first day of it he was discharged from prison, and on his advice civil disobedience was suspended for six weeks.[17]

A New Challenge

Everywhere there was in evidence a new spirit of inquiry, a questioning and a challenge to existing institutions. The general direction of the mental wind was obvious, but still it was a gentle breeze, unsure of itself. Some people flirted with fascist ideas. A clear and definite ideology was lacking. Nationalism still was the dominating thought.

It seemed clear to me that nationalism would remain the outstanding urge, till some measure of political freedom was attained. Because of this the Congress had been, and was still (apart from certain labour circles), the most advanced organization in India, as it was far the most powerful. During the past thirteen years, under Gandhiji's leadership, it had produced a wonderful awakening of the masses, and, in spite of its vague bourgeois ideology, it had served a revolutionary purpose. It had not exhausted its utility yet and was not likely to do so till the nationalist urge gave place to a social one. Future progress, both ideological and in action, must therefore be largely associated with the Congress, though other avenues could also be used. . . .

But Congress at present meant Gandhiji. What would he do?

Ideologically he was sometimes amazingly backward, and yet in action he had been the greatest revolutionary of recent times in India. He was a unique personality, and it was impossible to judge him by the usual standards, or even to apply the ordinary canons of logic to him. But, because he was a revolutionary at bottom and was pledged to political independence for India, he was bound to play an uncompromising role till that independence was achieved. And in this very process he would release tremendous mass energies and would himself, I half hoped, advance step by step toward the social goal.

Communist Attacks

The orthodox communists in India and outside have for many years past attacked Gandhiji and the Congress bitterly, and imputed all manner of base motives to the Congress leaders. Many of their theoretical criticisms of Congress ideology were able and pointed, and subsequent events partly justified them. Some of the earlier communist analyses of the general Indian political situation turned out to be remarkably correct. But, as soon as they leave their general principles and enter into details, and especially when they consider the role of the Congress, they go hopelessly astray. One of the reasons for the weakness in numbers as well as influence of the communists in India is that, instead of spreading a scientific knowledge of communism and trying to convert people's minds to it, they have largely concentrated on abuse of others. This has reacted on them and done them great injury. Most of them are used to working in labour areas, where a few slogans are usually enough to win over the workers. But mere slogans are not enough for the intellectual, and they have not realized that in India today the middle-class intellectual is the most revolutionary

force. Almost in spite of the orthodox communists, many intellectuals have been drawn to communism, but even so there is a gulf between them.

According to the communists, the objective of the Congress leaders has been to bring mass pressure on the government in order to obtain industrial and commercial concessions in the interests of Indian capitalists and zamindars. The task of the Congress is "to harness the economic and political discontent of the peasantry, the lower middle class, and the industrial working class to the chariot of the mill owners and financiers of Bombay, Ahmedabad, and Calcutta". The Indian capitalists are supposed to sit behind the scenes and issue orders to the Congress Working Committee first to organize a mass movement and, when it becomes too vast and dangerous, to suspend it or side-track it. Further, that the Congress leaders really do not want the British to go away, as they are required to control and exploit a starving population, and the Indian middle class do not feel themselves equal to this.

It is surprising that able communists should believe this fantastic analysis, but, believing this as they apparently do, it is not surprising that they should fail so remarkably in India. Their basic error seems to be that they judge the Indian national movement from European labour standards; and, used as they are to the repeated betrayals of the labour movement by the labour leaders, they apply the analogy to India. . . .

The idea that Gandhiji was forced to launch seemingly aggressive movements in 1921 and 1930 because of mass pressure is also absolutely wrong. Mass stirrings there were, of course, but on both occasions it was Gandhiji who forced the pace. In 1921 he carried the Congress

almost singlehanded and plunged it into non-co-operation. In 1930 it would have been quite impossible to have any aggressive and effective direct-action movement if he had resisted it in any way.

It is very unfortunate that foolish and ill-informed criticisms of a personal nature are made, because they divert attention from the real issues. To attack Gandhiji's bona fides is to injure oneself and one's own cause, for to the millions of India he stands as the embodiment of truth, and anyone who knows him at all realizes the passionate earnestness with which he is always seeking to do right.[18]

Village Industries and the Machine

The Congress, under Gandhiji's leadership, had long championed the revival of village industries, especially hand spinning and hand weaving. At no time, however, had the Congress been opposed to the development of big industries, and whenever it had the chance, in the legislatures or elsewhere, it had encouraged this development. . . .

Is there a conflict between these two approaches? Possibly there is a difference in emphasis, a realization of certain human and economic factors which were overlooked previously in India. Indian industrialists and the politicians who supported them thought too much in terms of the nineteenth-century development of capitalist industry in Europe and ignored many of the evil consequences that were obvious in the twentieth century. In India, because normal progress had been arrested for a hundred years, those consequences were likely to be more far-reaching. The kind of medium-scale industries that were being started in India, under the prevailing economic system, resulted not in absorbing labour but in creating more unemployment. While capital accumulated at one end, poverty and un-

employment increased at the other. Under a different system and with a stress on big-scale industries absorbing labour, and with planned development, this might well have been avoided.

This fact of increasing mass poverty influenced Gandhiji powerfully. It is true, I think, that there is a fundamental difference between his outlook on life generally and what might be called the modern outlook. He is not enamoured of ever increasing standards of living and the growth of luxury at the cost of spiritual and moral values. He does not favour the soft life; for him the straight way is the hard way, and the love of luxury leads to crookedness and loss of virtue. Above all he is shocked at the vast gulf that stretches between the rich and the poor, in their ways of living and their opportunities of growth. For his own personal and psychological satisfaction, he crossed that gulf and went over to the side of the poor, adopting, with only such improvements as the poor themselves could afford, their ways of living, their dress or lack of dress. This vast difference between the few rich and the poverty-stricken masses seemed to him to be due to two principal causes: foreign rule and the exploitation that accompanied it, and the capitalist industrial civilization of the West as embodied in the big machine. He reacted against both. He looked back with yearning to the days of the old autonomous and more or less self-contained village community where there had been an automatic balance between production, distribution, and consumption; where political or economic power was spread out and not concentrated as it is today; where a kind of simple democracy prevailed; where the gulf between the rich and the poor was not so marked; where the evils of great cities were absent and people lived in contact with the life-giving soil and breathed the pure air of the open spaces.

There was all this basic difference in outlook as to the meaning of life itself between him and many others, and this difference coloured his language as well as his activities. His language, vivid and powerful as it often was, drew its inspiration from the religious and moral teachings of the ages, principally of India but also of other countries. Moral values must prevail; the ends can never justify unworthy means, or else the individual and the race perish.

And yet he was no dreamer living in some fantasy of his own creation, cut off from life and its problems. He came from Gujrat, the home of hardheaded businessmen, and he had an unrivalled knowledge of the Indian villages and the conditions of life that prevailed there. It was out of that personal experience that he evolved his programme of the spinning wheel and village industry. If immediate relief was to be given to the vast numbers of the unemployed and partially employed, if the rot that was spreading throughout India and paralyzing the masses was to be stopped, if the villagers' standards were to be raised, however little, *en masse,* if they were to be taught self-reliance instead of waiting helplessly like derelicts for relief from others, if all this was to be done without much capital, then there seemed no other way. Apart from the evils inherent in foreign rule and exploitation, and the lack of freedom to initiate and carry through big schemes of reform, the problem of India was one of scarcity of capital and abundance of labour—how to utilize that wasted labour, that manpower that was producing nothing. Foolish comparisons are made between manpower and machine power; of course a big machine can do the work of a thousand or ten thousand persons. But if those ten thousand sit idly by or starve, the introduction of that machine is not a social gain, except in long perspective which envisages a change in

social conditions. When the big machine is not there at all, then no question of comparison arises; it is a net gain both from the individual and the national point of view to utilize manpower for production. There is no necessary conflict between this and the introduction of machinery on the largest scale, provided that machinery is used primarily for absorbing labour and not for creating fresh unemployment.[19]

In Yeravda Prison

While I waited for my discharge from prison, the new form of civil disobedience for individuals was beginning outside. Gandhiji decided to give the lead, and, after giving full notice to the authorities, he started on August 1 with the intention of preaching civil resistance to the Gujrat peasantry. He was immediately arrested, sentenced to one year, and sent back again to his cell in Yeravda. I was glad he had gone back. But soon a new complication arose. Gandhiji claimed the same facilities for carrying on Harijan work from prison as he had had before; the government refused to grant them. Suddenly we heard that Gandhiji had started fasting again on this issue. It seemed an extraordinarily trivial matter for such a tremendous step. It was quite impossible for me to understand his decision, even though he might be completely right in his argument with the government. We could do nothing, and we looked on bewildered.

After a week of the fast his condition grew rapidly worse. He had been removed to a hospital, but he was still a prisoner, and the government would not give in on the question of facilities for Harijan work. He lost the will to live (which he had during his previous fasts) and allowed himself to go downhill. The end seemed to be near. He said

good-bye and even made dispositions of the few personal articles that were lying about him, giving some to the nurses. But the government had no intention of allowing him to die on its hands, and that evening he was suddenly discharged. It was just in time to save him. Another day and perhaps it would have been too late. Probably a great deal of the credit for saving him should go to C. F. Andrews, who had rushed to India, contrary to Gandhiji's advice. . . .

I went to Poona to see Gandhiji. I was happy to see him again and to find that, though weak, he was making good progress. We had long talks. It was obvious that we differed considerably in our outlook on life and politics and economics; but I was grateful to him for the generous way in which he tried to come as far as he could to meet my viewpoint. Our correspondence, subsequently published, dealt with some of the wider issues that filled my mind, and, though they were referred to in vague language, the general drift was clear. I was happy to have Gandhiji's declaration that there must be a devesting of vested interests, though he laid stress that this should be by conversion, not compulsion. As some of his methods of conversion are not far removed, to my thinking, from courteous and considerate compulsion, the difference did not seem to me very great. I had the feeling with him then, as before, that though he might be averse to considering vague theories the logic of facts would take him, step by step, to the inevitability of fundamental social changes.

For the present, I thought then, this question did not arise. We were in the middle of our national struggle, and civil disobedience was still the programme, in theory, of the Congress, although it had been restricted to individuals. We had to carry on as we were and try to spread socialistic ideas among the people, and especially among the

more politically conscious Congress workers, so that when the time came for another declaration of policy we might be ready for a notable advance. Meanwhile, Congress was an unlawful organization, and the British government was trying to crush it. We had to meet that attack.

Retirement from Congress

The principal problem which faced Gandhiji was a personal one. What was he to do himself? He was in a tangle. If he went to jail again, the same question of Harijan privileges would arise and, presumably, the government would not give in, and he would fast again. Would the same round be repeated? He refused to submit to such a cat-and-mouse policy, and said that if he fasted again for those privileges, the fast would continue even though he were released. That meant a fast to death.

The second possible course before him was not to court imprisonment during the year of his sentence (ten and a half months of this remained still) and devote himself to Harijan work. But at the same time he would meet Congress workers and advise them when necessary.

A third possibility he suggested to me was that he should retire from the Congress altogether for a while, and leave it in the hands of the "younger generation," as he put it.

The first course, ending, as it seemed, in his death by starvation, was impossible for any one of us to recommend. The third seemed very undesirable when the Congress was an illegal body. It would result either in the immediate withdrawal of civil disobedience and all forms of direct action and a going back to legality and constitutional activity, or in a Congress, outlawed and isolated, now even from Gandhiji, being crushed still further by the Government. Besides, there was no

question of any group's taking possession of an illegal organization which could not meet and discuss any policy. By a process of exclusion we arrived thus at the second course of action suggested by him. Most of us disliked it, and we knew that it would give a heavy blow to the remains of civil disobedience. If the leader had himself retired from the fight, it was not likely that many enthusiastic Congress workers would jump into the fire. But there seemed no other way out of the tangle, and Gandhiji made his announcement accordingly. . . .

Socialist Criticisms

In Bombay I met many friends and comrades, some only recently out of prison. The socialistic element was strong there, and there was much resentment at recent happenings in the upper ranks of the Congress. Gandhiji was severely criticized for his metaphysical outlook applied to politics. With much of the criticism I was in agreement, but I was quite clear that, situated as we were, we had little choice in the matter and had to carry on. Any attempt to withdraw civil disobedience would have brought no relief to us, for the government's offensive would continue and all effective work would inevitably lead to prison. Our national movement had arrived at a stage when it had to be suppressed by the government, or it would impose its will on the British government. This meant that it had arrived at a stage when it was always likely to be declared illegal, and, as a movement, it could not go back even if civil disobedience were withdrawn. The continuance of disobedience made little difference in practice, but it was an act of moral defiance which had value. It was easier to spread new ideas during a struggle than it would be when the struggle was wound up for the time being, and demoralization ensued. The only alternative

At prayer in Delhi.

Among millions...

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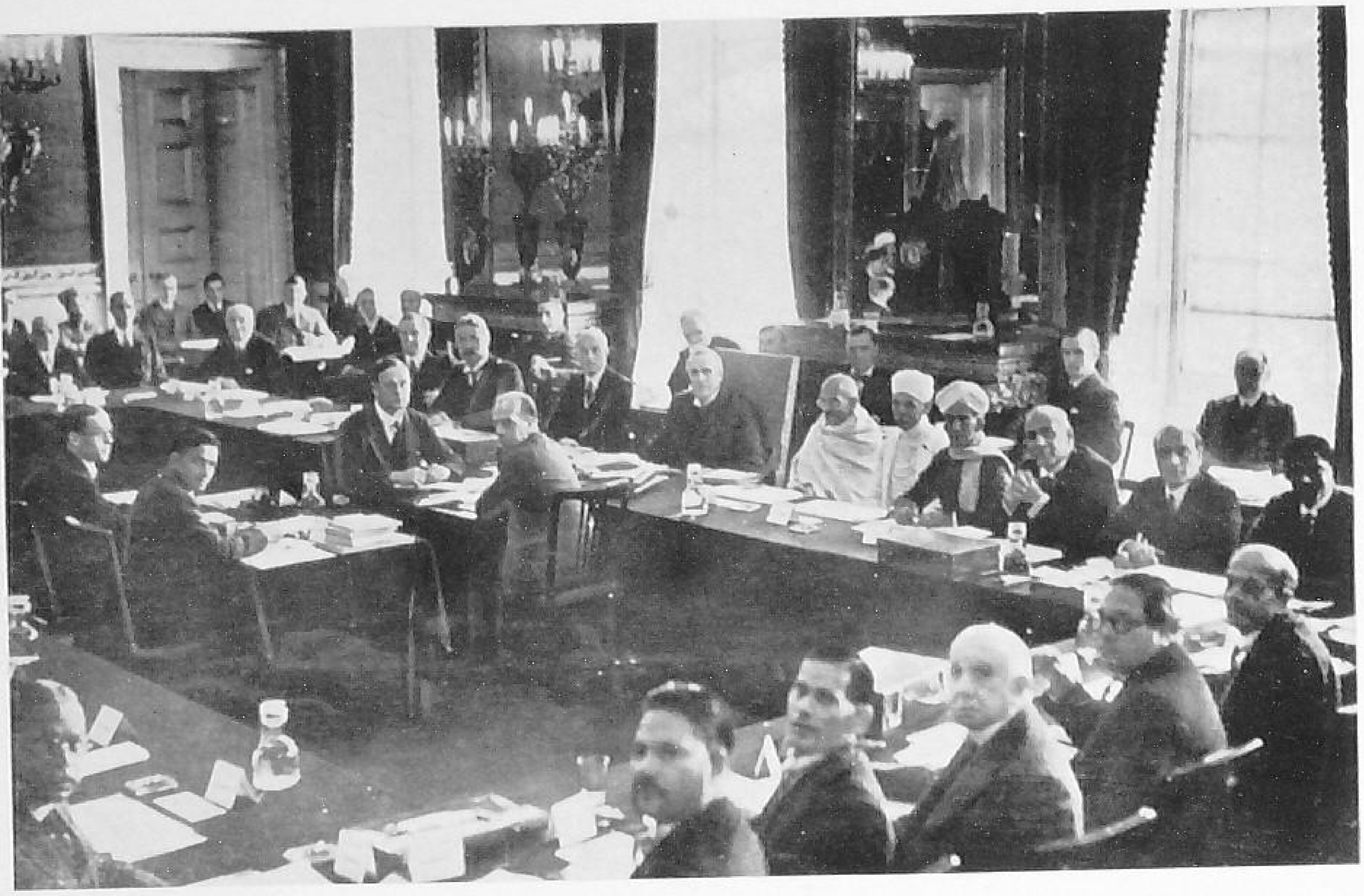
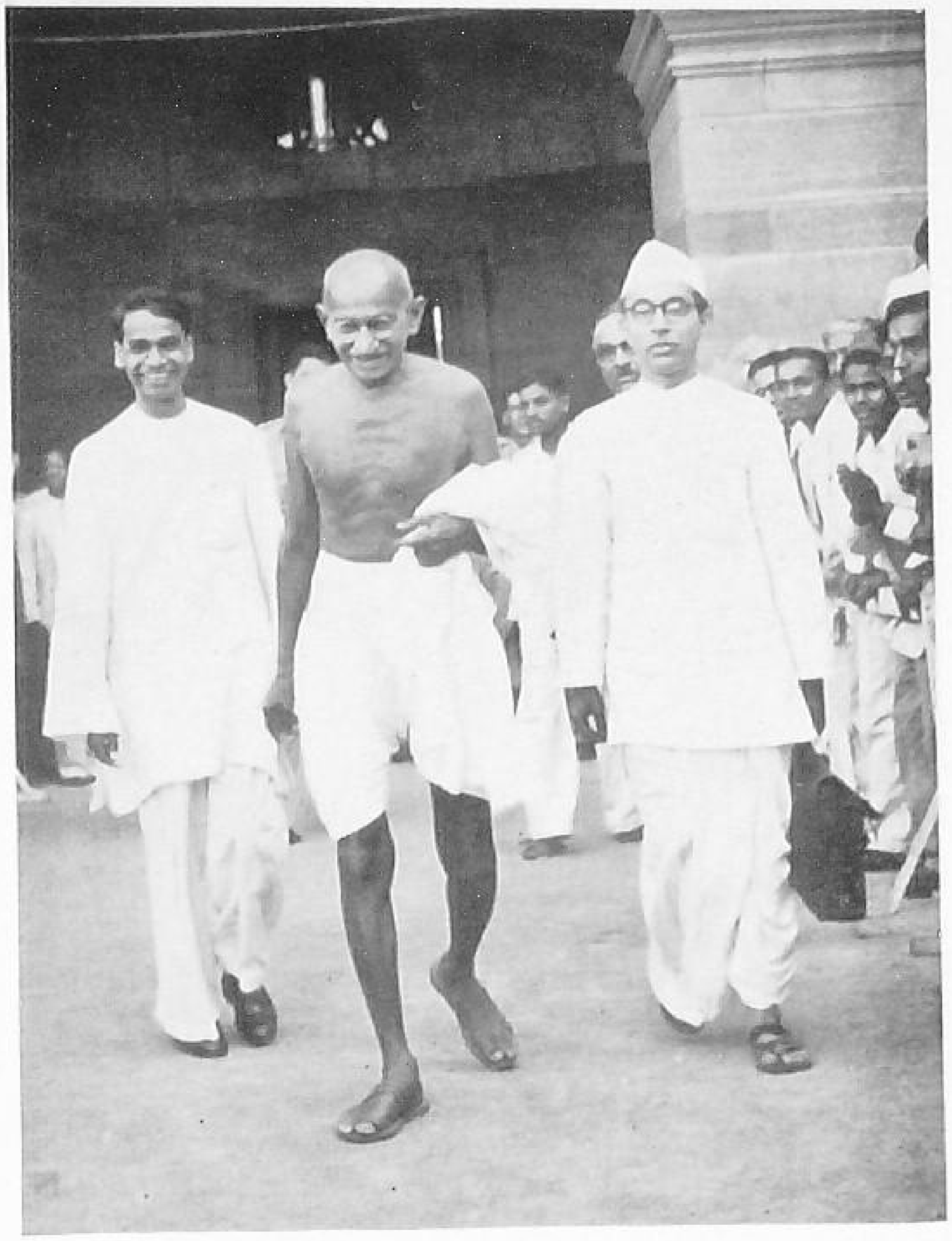


At the Round Table Conference.

Below : In an East End street, London, 1931.

PHOTO : ANON

PHOTO : ANON



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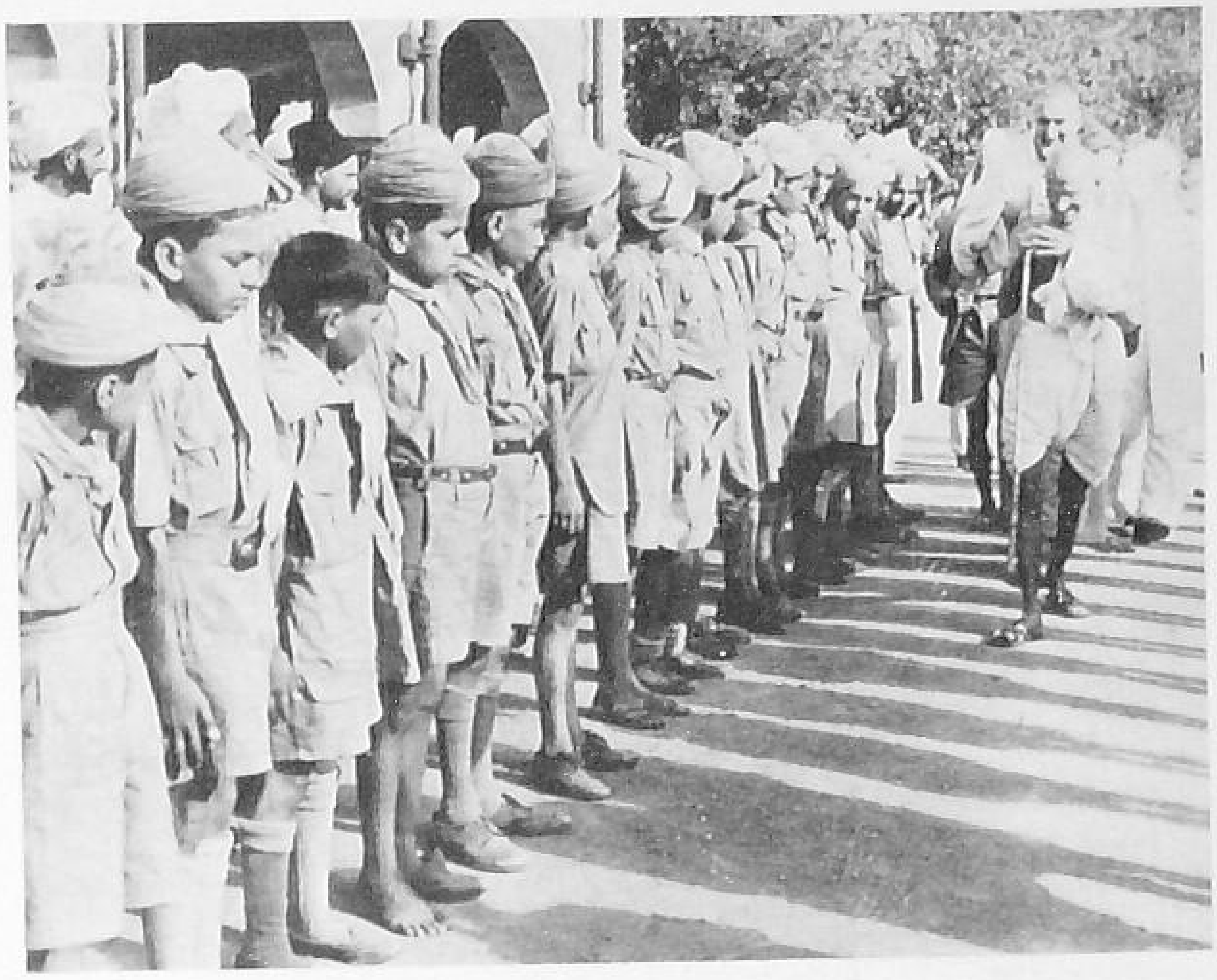
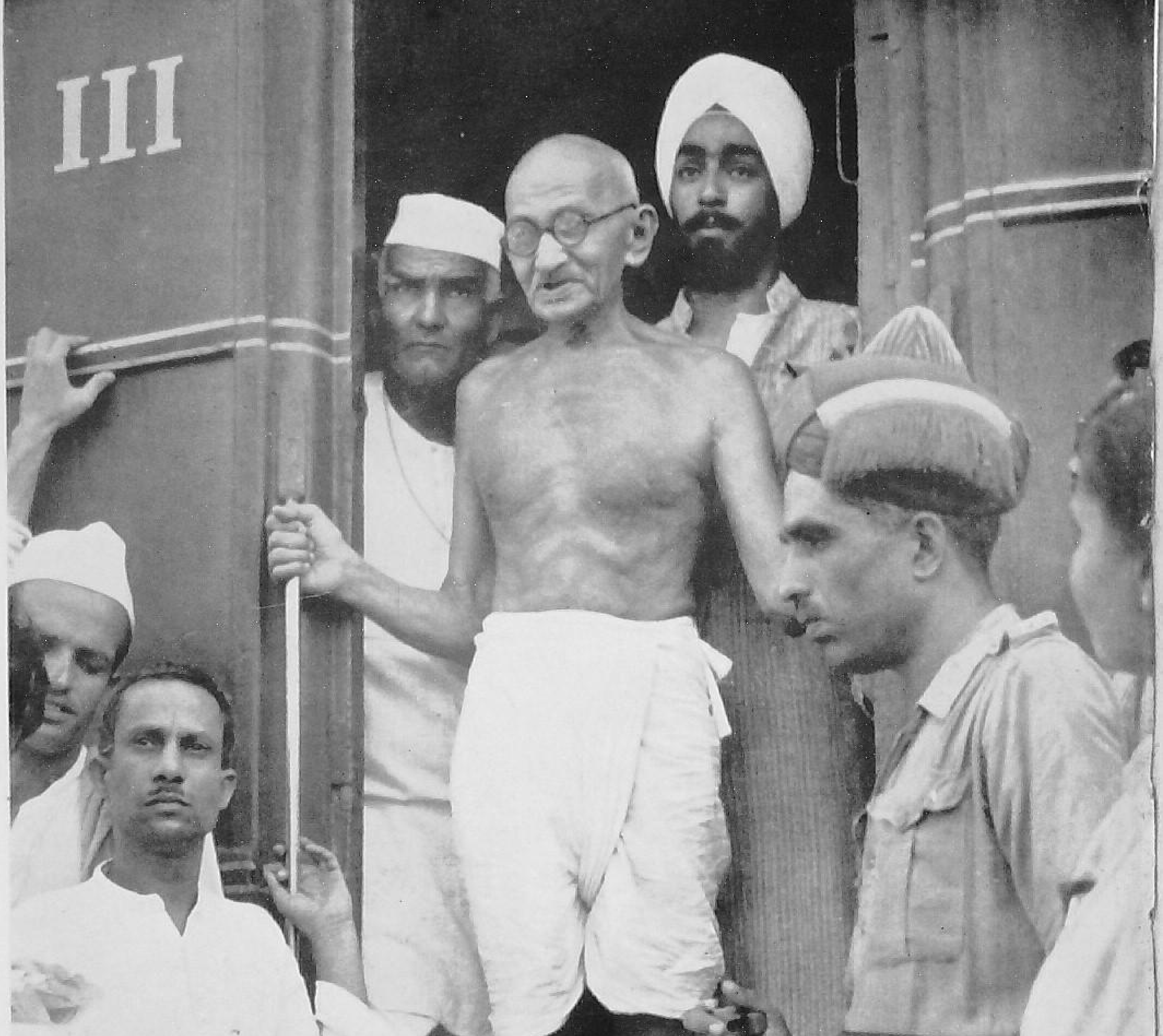


Top : Among young Pathans.
Left : At the Viceroy's House.
Below : In a street in Beliaghata, Calcutta, 1947.

PHOTO : STATESMAN



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At a Railway station.

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to the struggle was a compromising attitude to the British authority and constitutional action in the councils.

It was a difficult position, and the choice was not an easy one. I appreciated the mental conflicts of my colleagues, for I had myself had to face them. But I found there, as I have found elsewhere in India, some people who wanted to make high socialistic doctrine a refuge for inaction. It was a little irritating to find people who did little themselves criticizing others who had shouldered the burden in heat and dust of the fray as reactionaries.

These parlour socialists are especially hard on Gandhiji as the arch-reactionary, and advance arguments which in logic leave little to be desired. But the little fact remains that this "reactionary" knows India, understands India, almost *is* peasant India, and has shaken up India as no so-called revolutionary has done. Even his latest Harijan activities have gently but irresistibly undermined orthodox Hinduism and shaken it to its foundations. The whole tribe of the orthodox have ranged themselves against him and consider him their most dangerous enemy, although he continues to treat them with all gentleness and courtesy. In his own peculiar way he has a knack of releasing powerful forces which spread out, like ripples on the water's surface, and affect millions. Reactionary or revolutionary, he has changed the face of India, given pride and character to a cringing and demoralized people, built up strength and consciousness in the masses, and made the Indian problem a world problem. Quite apart from the objective aimed at and its metaphysical implications, the method of non-violent non-co-operation or civil resistance is a unique and powerful contribution of his to India and the world, and there can be no doubt that it has been peculiarly suited to Indian conditions.[20]

What a wonderful man was Gandhiji after all, with his amazing and almost irresistible charm and subtle power over people! His writings and his sayings conveyed little enough impression of the man behind; his personality was far bigger than they would lead one to think. And his services to India, how vast they had been! He had instilled courage and manhood in her people, and discipline and endurance, and the power of joyful sacrifice for a cause, and, with all his humility, pride. Courage is the one sure foundation of character, he had said; without courage there is no morality, no religion, no love. "One cannot follow truth or love so long as one is subject to fear." With all his horror of violence, he had told us that "cowardice is a thing even more hateful than violence." And "discipline is the pledge and guarantee that a man means business. There is no deliverance and no hope without sacrifice, discipline, and self-control. Mere sacrifice without discipline will be unavailing." Words only and pious phrases perhaps, rather platitudinous, but there was power behind the words, and India knew that this little man meant business.

He came to represent India to an amazing degree and to express the very spirit of that ancient and tortured land. Almost he was India, and his very failings were Indian failings. A slight to him was hardly a personal matter, it was an insult to the nation; and viceroys and others who indulged in these disdainful gestures little realized what a dangerous crop they were sowing. I remember how hurt I was when I first learned that the Pope had refused an interview to Gandhiji when he was returning from the Round Table Conference in December 1931. That refusal seemed to me an affront to India, and there can

be no doubt that the refusal was intentional, though the affront was probably not thought of. The Catholic Church does not approve of saints or mahatmas outside its fold, and because some Protestant churchmen had called Gandhiji a great man of religion and a real Christian, it became all the more necessary for Rome to dissociate itself from this heresy. . . .

In spite of the closest association with him for many years, I am not clear in my own mind about his objective. I doubt if he is clear himself. One step is enough for me, he says; and he does not try to peep into the future or to have a clearly conceived end before him. Look after the means, and the end will take care of itself, he is never tired of repeating. Be good in your personal individual lives, and all else will follow. That is not a political or scientific attitude, nor is it perhaps even an ethical attitude. It is narrowly moralist, and it begs the question: What is goodness? Is it merely an individual affair or a social affair? Gandhiji lays all stress on character and attaches little importance to intellectual training and development. Intellect without character is likely to be dangerous, but what is character without intellect? How, indeed, does character develop? Gandhiji has been compared to the medieval Christian saints, and much that he says seems to fit in with this. It does not fit in at all with modern psychological experience and method. . . .

I imagine that Gandhiji is not so vague about the objective as he sometimes appears to be. He is passionately desirous of going in a certain direction, but this is wholly at variance with modern ideas and conditions, and he has so far been unable to fit the two, or to chalk out all the intermediate steps leading to his goal. Hence the appearance of vagueness and avoidance of clarity. But his general inclination has

been clear enough for a quarter of a century, ever since he started formulating his philosophy in South Africa. I do not know if those early writings still represent his views. I doubt if they do so in their entirety, but they do help us to understand the background of his thought.

"India's salvation consists," he wrote in 1909, "in unlearning what she has learned during the last fifty years. The railways, telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors, and suchlike have all to go; and the so-called upper classes have to learn consciously, religiously, and deliberately the simple peasant life, knowing it to be a life giving true happiness." And again: "Every time I get into a railway car or use a motor bus I know that I am doing violence to my sense of what is right"; "to attempt to reform the world by means of highly artificial and speedy locomotion is to attempt the impossible. . . ."

Gandhiji is always thinking in terms of personal salvation and of sin; while most of us have society's welfare uppermost in our minds. I find it difficult to grasp the idea of sin, and perhaps it is because of this that I cannot appreciate Gandhiji's general outlook. He is not out to change society or the social structure; he devotes himself to the eradication of sin from individuals. "The follower of Swadeshi," he has written, "never takes upon himself the vain task of trying to reform the world, for he believes that the world is moved and always will be moved according to the rules set by God." And yet he is aggressive enough in his attempts to reform the world; but the reform he aims at is individual reform, the conquest over the senses and the desire to indulge them, which is sin. Probably he will agree with the definition of liberty which an able Roman Catholic writer on fascism has given: "Liberty is no more than freedom from the bondage of sin." How almost identical this is with the words of the Bishop of

London written two hundred years ago: "The Freedom which Christianity gives is Freedom from the Bondage of sin and Satan and from the Dominion of Men's Lusts and Passions and inordinate Desires."[21]

"What Religion Means"

"No man can live without religion," Gandhiji has written somewhere. "There are some who in the egotism of their reason declare that they have nothing to do with religion, but that is like a man saying that he breathes, but that he has no nose." Again he says: "My devotion to truth has drawn me into the field of politics; and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means." Perhaps it would have been more correct if he had said that most of these people who want to exclude religion from life and politics mean by that word "religion" something very different from what he means. It is obvious that he is using it in a sense—probably moral and ethical more than any other—different from that of the critics of religion.[22]

The Paradox that is Gandhiji

People who do not know Gandhiji personally and have only read his writings are apt to think that he is a priestly type, extremely puritanical, long-faced, Calvinistic, and a kill-joy, something like the "priests in black gowns walking their rounds." But his writings do him an injustice; he is far greater than what he writes, and it is not quite fair to quote what he has written and criticize it. He is the very opposite of the Calvinistic priestly type. His smile is delightful, his laughter

infectious, and he radiates light-heartedness. There is something child-like about him which is full of charm. When he enters a room, he brings a breath of fresh air with him which lightens the atmosphere.

He is an extraordinary paradox. I suppose all outstanding men are so to some extent. For years I have puzzled over this problem: why with all his love and solicitude for the underdog he yet supports a system which inevitably produces it and crushes it; why with all his passion for non-violence he is in favour of a political and social structure which is wholly based on violence and coercion. Perhaps it is not correct to say that he is in favour of such a system; he is more or less of a philosophical anarchist. But, as the ideal anarchist state is too far off still and cannot easily be conceived, he accepts the present order. It is not, I think, a question of means, that he objects, as he does, to the use of violence in bringing about a change. Quite apart from the methods to be adopted for changing the existing order, an ideal objective can be envisaged, something that is possible of achievement in the not distant future.

Sometimes he calls himself a socialist, but he uses the word in a sense peculiar to himself which has little or nothing to do with the economic framework of society which usually goes by the name of socialism. Following his lead, a number of prominent Congressmen have taken to the use of that word, meaning thereby a kind of muddled humanitarianism. I know that Gandhiji is not ignorant of the subject, for he has read many books on economics and socialism and even Marxism, and has discussed it with others. But I am becoming more and more convinced that in vital matters the mind by itself does not carry us far.

Gandhiji underwent a tremendous conversion during his early

days in South Africa, and this shook him up greatly and altered his whole outlook on life. Since then he has had a fixed basis for all his ideas, and his mind is hardly an open mind. He listens with the greatest patience and attention to people who make new suggestions to him, but behind all his courteous interest one has the impression that one is addressing a closed door. He is so firmly anchored to some ideas that everything else seems unimportant. To insist on other and secondary matters would be a distraction and a distortion of the larger scheme. To hold onto that anchor would necessarily result in a proper adjustment of these other matters. If the means are right, the end is bound to be right.

That, I think, is the main background of his thought. He suspects also socialism, and more particularly Marxism, because of their association with violence. The very words "class war" breathe conflict and violence and are thus repugnant to him. He has also no desire to raise the standards of the masses beyond a certain very modest competence, for higher standards and leisure may lead to self-indulgence and sin. It is bad enough that the handful of the well-to-do are self-indulgent; it would be much worse if their numbers were added to.

That outlook is as far removed from the socialistic, or for that matter the capitalistic, as anything can be. To say that science and industrial technique today can demonstrably feed, clothe, and house everybody and raise their standards of living very greatly, if vested interests did not intervene, does not interest him much, for he is not keen on those results, beyond a certain limit. The promise of socialism therefore holds no attraction for him, and capitalism is only partly tolerable because it circumscribes the evil. He dislikes both, but puts up with the latter for the present as a lesser evil and as

something which exists and of which he has to take cognizance.

I may be wrong perhaps in imputing these ideas to him, but I do feel that he tends to think in this manner, and the paradoxes and confusions in his utterances that trouble us are really due to entirely different premises from which he starts. He does not want people to make an ideal of ever increasing comfort and leisure, but to think of the moral life, to give up their bad habits, to indulge themselves less and less, and thus to develop themselves individually and spiritually. And those who wish to serve the masses have not so much to raise them materially as to go down themselves to their level and mix with them on equal terms. In so doing inevitably they will help in raising them somewhat. That, according to him, is true democracy. "Many have despaired of resisting me," he writes in a statement he issued on September 17, 1934. "This is a humiliating revelation to me, a born democrat. . . ."

Gandhiji is always laying stress on the idea of the trusteeship of the feudal prince, of the big landlord, of the capitalist. He follows a long succession of men of religion. The Pope has declared that "the rich must consider themselves the servants of the Almighty as well as the guardians and the distributors of His wealth, to whom Jesus Christ Himself entrusted the fate of the poor." Popular Hinduism and Islam repeat this idea and are always calling upon the rich to be charitable, and they respond by building temples or mosques or *dharamshalas*, or giving, out of their abundance, coppers or silver to the poor and feeling very virtuous in consequence. . . .[23]

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The Statesman and The Prophet

Pearl Harbour and what followed it suddenly created a new tension and gave a new perspective. The Congress Working Committee met immediately after in this new atmosphere of tension. The Japanese had made no great advance till then, but major and stunning disasters had already taken place. The war ceased to be a distant spectacle and began to approach India and affect her intimately. Among Congressmen the desire to play an effective part in these perilous developments became strong, and the jail-going business seemed pointless in this new situation. But what could we do unless some door was open for honourable co-operation and the people could be made to feel some positive inspiration for action? A negative fear of threatening danger was not enough.

In spite of past history and all that had happened, we were eager to offer our co-operation in the war and especially for the defence of India, subject necessarily to a national government which would enable us to function in co-operation with other elements in the country and to make the people feel that it was really a national effort and not an imposed one by outsiders who had enslaved us. There was no difference of opinion on this general approach among Congressmen

as well as most others, but a vital difference of principle arose rather unexpectedly. Gandhiji found himself unable to give up his fundamental principle of non-violence even in regard to external war. The very nearness of that war became a challenge to him and a test of faith. If he failed at this critical moment, either non-violence was not the all-embracing and basic principle and course of action he had believed it to be, or else he was wrong in discarding it or compromising with it. He could not give up the faith of a lifetime on which he had based all his activities, and he felt that he must accept the necessary consequences and implications of that non-violence.

War in Europe

A similar difficulty and conflict had arisen for the first time about the time of the Munich crisis in 1938, when war seemed to be impending. I was in Europe then and was not present at the discussions that took place. But the difficulty passed with the passing of the crisis and the postponement of war. When war actually started in September 1939, no such question arose or was discussed by us. It was only in the late summer of 1940 that Gandhiji again made it clear to us that he could not make himself a party to violent warfare and he would like the Congress to adopt the same attitude in regard to it. He was agreeable to giving moral and every other kind of help, short of actual assistance in armed and violent warfare. He wanted Congress to declare its adherence to the principle of non-violence even for a free India. He knew, of course, that there were many elements in the country, and even within the Congress, who did not have that faith in non-violence; he realized that a government of free India was likely to discard non-violence when questions of defence were concerned and to build up

military, naval, and air power. But he wanted, if possible, for Congress at least to hold the banner of non-violence aloft and thus to train the minds of the people and make them think increasingly in terms of peaceful action. He had a horror of seeing India militarized. He dreamed of India becoming a symbol and example of non-violence and by her example weaning the rest of the world from war and the ways of violence. Even if India as a whole had not accepted this idea, Congress should not discard it when the time for trial came. . . .

At no time, so far as I am aware, was the question of non-violence considered in relation to the army, navy, or air forces, or the police. It was taken for granted that its application was confined to our struggle for freedom. It is true that it had a powerful effect on our thinking in many ways and it made the Congress strongly favour world disarmament and a peaceful solution of all international, as well as national, disputes.

When the Congress government were functioning in the provinces, many of them were eager to encourage some form of military training in the universities and colleges. It was the government of India that disapproved of this and came in the way.

Gandhiji no doubt disapproved of these tendencies, but he did not interfere. He did not even like the use of the police as an armed force for the suppression of riots, and he expressed his distress at it. But he put up with it as a lesser evil, and hoped that his teaching would gradually sink into the mind of India. It was his disapproval of such tendencies within the Congress that led him to sever his formal membership connection with the Congress in the early thirties, though even so he continued as the undoubted leader and adviser of the Congress.

It was an anomalous and unsatisfactory position for all of us, but perhaps it made him feel that thus he was not personally responsible for all the varied decisions which Congress took from time to time, which did not wholly conform to his principles and convictions. Always there has been the inner conflict within him, and in our national politics, between Gandhiji as a national leader and Gandhiji as a man with a prophetic message which was not confined to India but was for humanity and the world. It is never easy to reconcile a strict adherence to truth as one sees it with the exigencies and expediencies of life, and especially of political life. Normally people do not even worry themselves over this problem. They keep truth apart in some corner of their minds, if they keep it at all anywhere, and accept expediency as the measure of action. In politics that has been the universal rule, not only because unfortunately politicians are a peculiar species of opportunists, but because they cannot act purely on the personal plane. They have to make others act, and so they have to consider the limitations of others and their understanding of and receptivity to truth. And because of this they have to make compromises with that truth and adapt it to the prevailing circumstances. That adaptation becomes inevitable, and yet there are always risks attending it, and the tendency to ignore and abandon truth grows and expediency becomes the sole criterion of action.

Gandhiji for all his rocklike adherence to certain principles, has shown a great capacity to adapt himself to others and to changing circumstances, to take into consideration the strength and weakness of those others, and especially of the mass of the people, and how far they were capable of acting up to the truth as he saw it. But from time to time he pulls himself up, as if he were afraid that he had gone too

far in his compromising, and returns to his moorings. In the midst of action, he seems to be in tune with the mass mind, responsive to its capacity and therefore adapting himself to it to some extent; at other times he becomes more theoretical and apparently less adaptable. There is also the same difference observable in his action and his writings. This is confusing to his own people; more so to others who are ignorant of the background in India.

How far a single individual can influence a people's thought and ideology it is difficult to say. Some people in history have exerted a powerful influence, and yet it may be that they have emphasized and brought out something that already existed in the mind of the people, or have given clear and pointed expression to the vaguely felt ideas of the age. Gandhiji's influence on India's mind has been profound in the present age; how long and in what form it will endure, only the future can show. That influence is not limited to those who agree with him or accept him as a national leader; it extends to those also who disagree with him and criticize him. Very few persons in India accept in its entirety his doctrine of non-violence or his economic theories, yet very many have been influenced by them in some way or other. Usually speaking in terms of religion, he has emphasized the moral approach to political problems as well as those of everyday life. The religious background has affected those chiefly who were inclined that way, but the moral approach has influenced others also. Many have been appreciably raised to higher levels of moral and ethical action, and many more have been forced to think at least in those terms, and that thought itself has some effect on action and behaviour. Politics ceases to be just expediency and opportunism, as it usually has been everywhere, and there is a continuous moral tussle preceding thought

and action. Expediency, or what appears to be immediately possible and desirable, can never be ignored, but it is toned down by other consideration and a longer view of more distant consequences.

Gandhiji's influence in these various directions has pervaded India and left its mark. But it is not because of his non-violence or economic theories that he has become the foremost and most outstanding of India's leaders. To the vast majority of India's people he is the symbol of India determined to be free, of militant nationalism, of a refusal to submit to arrogant might, of never agreeing to anything involving national dishonour. Though many people in India may disagree with him on a hundred matters, though they may criticize him or even part company from him on some particular issues, at a time of action and struggle when India's freedom is at stake, they flock to him again and look up to him as their inevitable leader.

When Gandhiji raised in 1940 the question of non-violence in relation to the war and the future of free India, the Congress Working Committee had to face the issue squarely. They made it clear to him that they were unable to go as far as he wanted them to go and could not possibly commit India or the Congress to future applications of this principle in the external domain. This led to a definite and public break with him on this issue. Two months later further discussions led to an agreed formula which was later adopted as part of a resolution by the All-India Congress Committee. That formula did not wholly represent Gandhiji's attitude; it represented what he agreed, perhaps rather unwillingly, for Congress to say on this subject. At that time the British Government had already rejected the latest offer made by the Congress for co-operation in the war on the basis of a national government. Some kind of conflict was approaching, and, as was

inevitable, both Gandhiji and Congress looked toward each other and were impelled by a desire to find a way out of the deadlock between them. The formula did not refer to the war, as just previously our offer of co-operation had been unceremoniously and utterly rejected. It dealt theoretically with the Congress policy in regard to non-violence, and for the first time stated how, in the opinion of the Congress, the free India of the future should apply it in its external relations. That part of the resolution ran thus:

[The A.I.C.C.] firmly believes in the policy and practice of non-violence not only in the struggle for Swaraj, but also, in so far as this may be possible of application, in free India. The Committee is convinced, and recent world events have demonstrated, that complete world disarmament is necessary and the establishment of a new and juster political and economic order, if the world is not to destroy itself and revert to barbarism. A free India will, therefore, throw all her weight in favour of world disarmament and should herself be prepared to give a lead in this to the world. Such lead will inevitably depend on external factors and internal conditions, but the state would do its utmost to give effect to this policy of disarmament. Effective disarmament and the establishment of world peace by the ending of national wars depend ultimately on the removal of the causes of wars and national conflicts. These causes must be rooted out by the ending of the domination of one country over another and the exploitation of one people or group by another. To that end India will peacefully labour, and it is with this objective in view that the people of India desire to attain the status of a free and independent nation. Such freedom will be the prelude to the close association with other countries within a comity of free nations for the peace and progress of the world.

This declaration, it will be noticed, while strongly affirming the Congress wish for peaceful action and disarmament, also emphasized a number of qualifications and limitations.

The internal crisis within the Congress was resolved in 1940, and then came a year of prison for large numbers of us. In December 1941, however, the same crisis took shape again when Gandhiji insisted on complete non-violence. Again there was a split and public disagreement, and the president of the Congress, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and others were unable to accept Gandhiji's view. It became clear that the Congress as a whole, including some of the faithful followers of Gandhiji, disagreed with him in this matter. The force of circumstances and the rapid succession of dramatic events influenced all of us, including Gandhiji, and he refrained from pressing his view on the Congress, though he did not identify himself with the Congress view.

At no other time was this issue raised by Gandhiji in the Congress. When later Sir Stafford Cripps came with his proposals, there was no question of non-violence. His proposals were considered purely from the political point of view. In later months, leading up to August 1942, Gandhiji's nationalism and intense desire for freedom made him even agree to Congress participation in the war if India could function as a free country. For him this was a remarkable and astonishing change, involving suffering of the mind and pain of the spirit. In the conflict between that principle of non-violence, which had become his very lifeblood and meaning of existence, and India's freedom, which was a dominating and consuming passion for him, the scales inclined toward the latter. That did not mean, of course, that he weakened in his faith in non-violence. But it did mean that he was prepared to agree to the Congress not applying it in this war. The practical

statesman took precedence over the uncompromising prophet.[24]

The War Approaches India

The approach of the war to India disturbed Gandhiji greatly. It was not easy to fit in his policy and programme of non-violence with this new development. Obviously civil disobedience was out of the question in the face of an invading army or between two opposing armies. Passivity or acceptance of invasion were equally out of the question. What then? His own colleagues, and the Congress generally, had rejected non-violence for such an occasion or as an alternative to armed resistance to invasion, and he had at last agreed that they had a right to do so. But he was none the less troubled, and for his own part, as an individual, he could not join any violent course of action. But he was much more than an individual; whether he had any official status or not in the nationalist movement, he occupied an outstanding and dominating position, and his word carried weight with large numbers of people.

Gandhiji knew India, and especially the Indian masses, as very few, if any, have known them in the past or the present. Not only had he widely travelled all over India and come into touch with millions of people, but there was something else which enabled him to come into emotional contact with those masses. He could merge himself with the masses and feel with them, and because they were conscious of this, they gave him their devotion and loyalty. And yet his view of India was to some extent coloured by the outlook he had imbibed in his early days in Gujrat. The Gujratis were essentially a community of peaceful traders and merchants, influenced by the Jain doctrine of non-violence. Other parts of India had been influenced much less by

this, and some not at all. The widespread Kshatriya class of warriors certainly did not allow it to interfere with war or hunting wild animals. Other classes also, including the Brahmans, had been as a whole little influenced by it. But Gandhiji took an eclectic view of the development of Indian thought and history and believed that non-violence had been the basic principle underlying it, even though there had been many deviations from it. That view appeared to be far-fetched, and many Indian thinkers and historians did not agree with it. This had nothing to do with the merits of non-violence in the present stage of human existence, but it did indicate a historical bias in Gandhiji's mind. . . .

Geography counts still and must count in the future, but other factors play a more important role now. Mountains and seas are no longer barriers but they still determine a people's character and a country's political and economic position. They cannot be ignored in considering new schemes of division, partition, or remerging, unless the planning is on a world scale.

Gandhiji's knowledge of India and the Indian people is profound. Though not greatly interested in history as such, and perhaps not possessing that feeling for history, that historical sense, which some people have, he is fully conscious and intimately aware of the historical roots of the Indian people. He is well informed about current events and follows them carefully, though inevitably he concentrates on present-day Indian problems. He has a capacity for picking out the essence of a problem or a situation, avoiding non-essentials. Judging everything by what he considers the moral aspect, he gets a certain grip and a longer perspective. Bernard Shaw has said that though Gandhi may commit any number of tactical errors, his essential

strategy continues to be right. Most people, however, are not much concerned with the long run; they are far more interested in the tactical advantage of the moment.[25]

The Call for Freedom

There were some, of course, in India who looked upon the war as something far bigger and vaster than the petty ambitions of the statesmen of the various countries involved in it, some who felt its revolutionary significance in their bones and realized that its ultimate issue and the consequences that would flow from it would take the world far beyond military victories and the pacts and utterances of politicians. But the number of these people was inevitably limited, and the great majority, as in other countries, took a narrower view, which they called realistic, and were governed by the considerations of the moment. Some, inclined to opportunism, adapted themselves to British policy and fitted themselves into it, as they would have collaborated with any other authority and policy. Some reacted strongly against this policy and felt that a submission to it was betrayal of not only India's cause but the world's cause. Most people became just passive, static, quiescent, the old failing of the Indian people against which we had struggled for so long.

While this struggle was going on in India's mind and a feeling of desperation was growing, Gandhiji wrote a number of articles which suddenly gave a new direction to people's thoughts, or, as often happens, gave shape to their vague ideas. Inaction at that critical stage and submission to all that was happening had become intolerable to him. The only way to meet that situation was for Indian freedom to be recognized and for a free India to meet aggression and invasion in

co-operation with allied nations. If this recognition was not forthcoming then some action must be taken to challenge the existing system and wake up the people from the lethargy that was paralyzing them and making them easy prey for every kind of aggression.

There was nothing new in this demand, for it was a repetition of what we had been saying all along, but there was a new urgency and passion in his speech and writing. And there was the hint of action. There was no doubt that he represented at the moment the prevailing sentiment in India. In a conflict between the two, nationalism had triumphed over internationalism, and Gandhiji's new writings created a stir all over India. And yet that nationalism was at no time opposed to internationalism and indeed was trying its utmost to find some opening to fit in with that larger aspect, if only it could be given an opportunity to do so honourably and effectively. There was no necessary conflict between the two, for unlike the aggressive nationalisms of Europe it did not seek to interfere with others but rather to co-operate with them to their common advantage. National freedom was seen as the essential basis of true internationalism and hence as the road to the latter, as well as the real foundation for co-operation in the common struggle against fascism and nazism. Meanwhile that internationalism which was being so much talked about was beginning to look suspiciously like the old policy of the imperialist powers, in a new and yet not so new attire; indeed, it was itself an aggressive nationalism, which in the name of empire or commonwealth or mandatary, sought to impose its will on others.

Some of us were disturbed and upset by this new development, for action was futile unless it was effective action, and any such effective action must necessarily come in the way of war effort at a time

when India herself stood in peril of invasion. Gandhiji's general approach also seemed to ignore important international considerations and appeared to be based on a narrow view of nationalism. During the three years of war we had deliberately followed a policy of non-embarrassment, and such action as we had indulged in had been in the nature of symbolic protest. That symbolic protest had assumed huge dimensions when thirty thousand of our leading men and women were sent to prison in 1940-41. And yet even that prison-going was a selected individual affair and avoided any mass upheaval or any direct interference with the governmental apparatus. We could not repeat that, and if we did something else it had to be of a different kind and on a more effective scale. Was this not bound to interfere with the war on India's borders and encourage the enemy?

These were obvious difficulties, and we discussed them at length with Gandhiji without converting each other. The difficulties were there, and risks and perils seemed to follow any course of action or inaction. It became a question of balancing them and choosing the lesser evil. Our mutual discussions led to a clarification of much that had been vague and cloudy, and to Gandhiji's appreciating many international factors to which his attention had been drawn. His subsequent writings underwent a change, and he himself emphasized these international considerations and looked at India's problem in a wider perspective. But his fundamental attitude remained: his objection to a passive submission to British autocratic and repressive policy in India and his intense desire to do something to challenge this. Submission then, according to him, meant that India would be broken in spirit, and whatever shape the war might take, whatever its end might be, her people would act in a servile way and their freedom

would not be achieved for a long time. It would mean also submission to an invader and not continuing resistance to him regardless even of temporary military defeat or withdrawal. It would mean the complete demoralization of our people and their losing all the strength that they had built up during a quarter of a century's unceasing struggle for freedom. It would mean that the world would forget India's demand for freedom and the postwar settlement would be governed by the old imperialist urges and ambitions.

Passionately desirous of India's freedom as he was, India was to him something more than his loved homeland; it was the symbol of all the colonial and exploited peoples of the world, the acid test whereby any world policy must be judged. If India remained unfree, then also the other colonial countries and subject races would continue in their present enslaved condition and the war would have been fought in vain. It was essential to change the moral basis of the war. The armies and the navies and air forces would function in their respective spheres and they might win by superior methods of violence; but to what end was their victory? And even armed warfare requires the support of morale; had not Napoleon said that in war "the moral is to the physical as three to one"? The moral factor of hundreds of millions of subject and exploited people all over the world realizing and believing that this war was really for their freedom was of immense importance even from the narrower viewpoint of the war, and much more so for the peace to come. The very fact that a crisis had arisen in the fortunes of the war necessitated a change in outlook and policy and the conversion of these sullen and doubting millions into enthusiastic supporters. If this miracle could take place, all the military might of the Axis powers would be of little avail and their collapse

was assured. Many of the peoples of the Axis countries might themselves be affected by this powerful world sentiment.

Resistance to the Invader

In India it was better to convert the sullen passivity of the people into a spirit of non-submission and resistance. Though that non-submission would be, to begin with, to arbitrary orders of the British authorities, it could be turned into resistance to an invader. Submissiveness and servility to one would lead to the same attitude toward the other and thus to humiliation and degradation.

We were familiar with all these arguments; we believed them and had ourselves used them frequently. But the tragedy was that the policy of the British government prevented that miracle from taking place, and all our attempts to solve the Indian problem even temporarily during the course of the war had failed, and all our requests for a declaration of war aims had been turned down. It was certain that a further attempt of this kind would also fail. What then? If it was to be conflict, howsoever much it might be justified on moral or other grounds, there could be no doubt that it would tend to interfere greatly with the effort in India at a time when the danger of invasion was considerable. There was no getting away from that fact. And yet, oddly enough, it was that very danger that had brought this crisis in our minds. For we could not remain idle spectators of it and see our country mismanaged and ruined by people whom we considered incompetent and wholly incapable of shouldering the burden of a people's resistance which the occasion demanded. All our pent-up passion and energy sought some outlet, some way of action.

Gandhiji was getting on in years, he was in the seventies, and

a long life of ceaseless activity, of hard toil, both physical and mental, had enfeebled his body. But he was still vigorous enough and he felt that all his lifework would be in vain if he submitted to circumstances then and took no action to vindicate what he prized most. His love of freedom for India and all other exploited nations and peoples overcame even his strong adherence to non-violence. He had previously given a grudging and rather reluctant consent to the Congress not adhering to this policy in regard to defence and the state's functions in an emergency, but he had kept himself aloof from this. He realized that his halfhearted attitude in this matter might well come in the way of a settlement with Britain and the United Nations. So he went further and himself sponsored a Congress resolution which declared that the primary function of the provisional government of free India would be to throw all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against aggression and to co-operate fully with the United Nations in the defence of India with all the armed as well as other forces at her command. It was no easy matter for him to commit himself in this way, but he swallowed the bitter pill, so overpowering was his desire that some settlement should be arrived at to enable India to resist the aggressor as a free nation.

Many of the theoretical and other differences that had often separated some of us from Gandhiji disappeared, but still that major difficulty remained—any action on our part must interfere with the war effort. Gandhiji, to our surprise, still clung to the belief that a settlement with the British government was possible, and he said that he would try his utmost to achieve it. And so, though he talked a great deal about action, he did not define it or indicate what he intended to do.

India's Mood Changes

While we were doubting and debating, the mood of the country changed and from a sullen passivity it rose to a pitch of excitement and expectation. Events were not waiting for a Congress decision or resolution; they had been pushed forward by Gandhiji's utterances, and now they were moving onward with their own momentum. It was clear that whether Gandhiji was right or wrong, he had crystallized the prevailing mood of the people. There was a desperateness in it, an emotional urge which gave second place to logic and reason or a calm consideration of the consequences of action. Those consequences were not ignored and it was realized that whether anything was achieved or not, the price paid in human suffering would be heavy. But the price that was being paid from day to day in torture of the mind was also heavy, and there was no prospect of escape from it. It was better to jump into the uncharted seas of action and do something rather than be the tame objects of a malign fate. It was not a politician's approach but that of a people grown desperate and reckless of consequences. And yet there was always an appeal to reason, an attempt to rationalize conflicting emotions, to find some consistency in the fundamental inconsistencies of human character. The war was going to be a long one, to last many more years; there had been many disasters and there were likely to be more, but the war would continue in spite of them till it had tamed and exhausted the passions which gave rise to it and which it had itself encouraged. There should be no half successes this time, which are often more painful than failures. It had taken a wrong turn not only in the fields of military action but even more so in regard to the more funda-

mental objectives for which it was supposed to be fought. Perhaps such action as we might indulge in might draw forcible attention to this latter failure and help to give a new and more promising turn. And even if present success was lacking it might serve that saving purpose in the longer run, and thus help also in giving powerful support in the future to military action.

If the temper of the people rose, so also did the temper of the Government. No emotional or other urge was required for this, for it was its natural temper and its normal way of functioning—the way of an alien authority in occupation of a subject country. It seemed to welcome this opportunity of crushing once for all, as it thought, all the elements in the country which dared to oppose its will. And for this it prepared accordingly.

Events marched ahead, and yet, curiously, Gandhiji, who had said so much about some action to protect the honour of India and affirm her right to freedom and as a free nation to co-operate fully in the fight against aggression, said nothing at all about the nature of this action. Peaceful, of course, it had necessarily to be, but what more? He began to lay greater stress on the possibilities of an agreement with the British government, on his intention to approach it again and try his utmost to find a way out. His final speech at the All-India Congress Committee meeting was an earnest plea for a settlement and expressed his determination to approach the Viceroy in this behalf. Neither in public nor in private at the meetings of the Congress Working Committee did he hint at the nature of the action he had in mind, except in one particular. He had suggested privately that in the event of failure of all negotiations, he would appeal for some kind of non-co-operation and a one-day protest hartal

or cessation of all work in the country, something in the nature of a one-day general strike, symbolic of a nation's protest. Even this was a vague suggestion which he did not particularize, for he did not want to make any further plans till he had made his attempt at a settlement. So neither he nor the Congress Working Committee issued any kind of directions, public or private, except that people should be prepared for all developments and should in any event adhere to the policy of peaceful and non-violent action.

Though Gandhiji was still hopeful of finding some way out of the impasse, very few persons shared his hope. The course of events and all the developments that had taken place pointed inevitably to a conflict, and when that stage arises middle positions cease to have importance and each individual has to choose on which side he will range himself or herself. For Congressmen, as for others who felt that way, there was no question of choice; it was inconceivable that the whole might of a powerful government should try to crush our people and that any of us should stand by and be passive spectators of a struggle in which India's freedom was involved. Many people, of course, do stand by in spite of their sympathies, but any such attempt to save himself from the consequences of his own previous acts would have been shameful and dishonourable for any prominent Congressman. But even apart from this there was no choice left for them. The whole of India's past history pursued them, as well as the agony of the present and the hope of the future, and all these drove them forward and conditioned their actions. "The piling up of the past upon the past goes on without relaxation," says Bergson in his *Creative Evolution.* "In reality, the past is preserved by itself, automatically. In its entirety, probably, it follows us at every instant. . . .

Doubtless we think with only a small part of our past, but it is with our entire past, including the original bent of our soul, that we desire, will and act."

The "Quit India Resolution"

On August 7 and 8, 1942, in Bombay the All-India Congress Committee considered and debated in public the resolution which has since come to be known as the "Quit India Resolution." That resolution was a long and comprehensive one, a reasoned argument for the immediate recognition of Indian freedom and the ending of British rule in India "both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom. . . . The possession of empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of modern imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm." The resolution went on to suggest the formation of a provisional government which would be composite and would represent all important sections of the people, and whose "primary function must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its command, together with its Allied Powers." This government would evolve a scheme for a constituent assembly which would prepare a constitution for India acceptable to all sections of the people. The constitution would be a federal one, with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units and

with the residuary powers vesting in those units. "Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it."

This freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to the freedom of all other Asiatic nations. Further, a world federation of free nations was proposed, of which a beginning should be made with the United Nations.

The committee stated that it was "anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China and Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardize the defensive capacity of the United Nations." (At that time the dangers to China and Russia were the greatest.) "But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations."

The Committee again appealed to Britain and the United Nations "in the interest of world freedom." But—and there came the sting of the resolution—"the Committee is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian Government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves therefore to sanction, for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines" under the inevitable leadership of Gandhiji. That sanction was to take effect only when Gandhiji so decided. Finally, it was stated that the Committee had "no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The

power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India."

In their concluding speeches Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Congress president, and Gandhiji made it clear that their next steps would be to approach the Viceroy, as representing the British government, and to appeal to the heads of the principal United Nations for an honourable settlement, which, while recognizing the freedom of India, would also advance the cause of the United Nations in the struggle against the aggressor Axis powers.

The resolution was finally passed late in the evening of August 8, 1942. A few hours later, in the early morning of August 9, a large number of arrests were made in Bombay and all over the country.[26]

After Freedom

Freedom came to us, our long-sought freedom, and it came with a minimum of violence. But immediately after, we had to wade through oceans of blood and tears. Worse than the blood and tears was the shame and disgrace that accompanied them.

Where were our values and standards then, where was our old culture, our humanism and spirituality and all that India has stood for in the past. Suddenly darkness descended upon this land and madness seized the people. Fear and hatred blinded our minds and all the restraints which civilization imposes were swept away. Horror piled on horror and a sudden emptiness seized us at the brute savagery of human beings. The lights seemed all to go out; not all, for a few still flickered in the raging tempest. We sorrowed for the dead and the dying and for those whose suffering was greater than that of death. We sorrowed even more for India, our common mother, for whose freedom we had laboured these long years.

The lights seemed to go out. But one bright flame continued to burn and shed its light on the surrounding gloom. And looking at that pure flame, strength and hope returned to us and we felt that whatever momentary disaster might overwhelm our people, there was the spirit of India, strong and unsullied, rising above the turmoil of the present and not caring for the petty exigencies of the day.

How many . . . realize what it has meant to India to have the presence of Mahatma Gandhi during these months? We all know of his magnificent services to India and to freedom during the past half century and more. But no service could have been greater than what he has performed during the past four months when in a dissolving world he has been like a rock of purpose and a light-house of truth, and his firm low voice has risen above the clamours of the multitude, pointing out the path of rightful endeavour.

And because of this bright flame we could not lose faith in India and her people. And yet the surrounding gloom was in itself a menace. Why should we relapse into this gloom when the sun of freedom had arisen?

It is necessary for all of us . . . to pause and think for a while on these basic matters, for the future of India is taking shape in this present, and the future is going to be what millions of young men and women want it to be.

Lessons of War

There is today a narrowness and intolerance and insensitiveness and lack of awareness which rather frighten me. We have recently passed through a great world war. That war has not brought peace and freedom, but it should teach us many lessons. It brought the downfall

of what had been called fascism and nazism. Both of these creeds were narrow and overbearing and based on hatred and violence. I watched their growth in their respective countries as well as elsewhere. They brought a certain prestige to their people for a while, but they also killed the spirit and destroyed all values and standards of thought and behaviour. They ended by ruining the nations they sought to exalt.

I see something very similar to that flourishing in India today. It talks in the name of nationalism, sometimes of religion and culture, and yet it is the very opposite of nationalism, of true morality and of real culture. If there was any doubt of this, the past few months would have shown us the real picture. For some years we have had to contend against this policy of hatred and violence and narrow communalism on the part of a section of the community. Now that section has succeeded in forming a state carved out of certain parts of India.

Moslem communalism, which had been such a danger and obstruction to Indian freedom, now calls itself a state. It has ceased to be a living force in India proper today because its strength is concentrated in other parts. But it has resulted in degrading other sections of the community who seek to copy it and sometimes even to improve upon it.

We have now to face this reaction in India and the cry is raised for a communal state, even though the word may be different. And not only the communal state is demanded but in all fields of political and cultural activity the same narrowing and strangling demand is put forward.

If we look back at India's long history we find that our forefathers made wonderful progress whenever they looked out at the

world with clear and fearless eyes and kept the windows of their minds open to give and to receive. And, in later periods, when they grew narrow in outlook and shrank from outside influences India suffered a set-back, politically and culturally. What a magnificent inheritance we have got, though we have abused it often enough. India has been and is a vital nation, in spite of all the misery and suffering she has experienced. That vitality in the realm of constructive and creative effort spread to many parts of the Asian world and elsewhere and brought splendid conquests in its train. These conquests were not so much of the sword but of the mind and heart, which bring healing and which endure when the men of the sword and their work are forgotten. But that very vitality, if not rightly and creatively directed, may turn inward and destroy and degrade.

Even during the brief span of our lives we have seen these two forces at play in India and the world at large—the force of constructive and creative effort and the force of destruction. Which will triumph in the end? And on which side do we stand? That is a vital question for each one of us and, more especially, for those from whom the leaders of the nation will be drawn, and on whom the burden of tomorrow will fall. We dare not sit on the fence and refuse to face the issue. We dare not allow our minds to be muddled by passion and hatred when clear thought and effective action are necessary.

What Kind of India?

What kind of India are we working for? And what kind of world? Are hatred and violence and fear and communalism and narrow provincialism to mould our future? Surely not, if there has been any truth in us and in our professions. Here in this city of Allahabad,

dear to me not only because of my close association with it but also because of its part in India's history, my boyhood and youth were spent in dreaming dreams and seeing visions of India's future. Was there any real substance in those dreams or were they merely the fancies of a fevered brain? Some small part of those dreams has come true but not in the manner I had imagined, and so much still remains, instead of a feeling of triumph at achievement, there is an emptiness and distress at the sorrow that surrounds us, and we have to wipe the tears from a million eyes. . . .

Let us be clear about our national objective. We aim at a strong, free and democratic India where every citizen has an equal place and full opportunity of growth and service, where present-day inequalities in wealth and status have ceased to be, where our vital impulses are directed to creative and co-operative endeavour. In such an India communalism, separatism, isolation, untouchability, bigotry, and exploitation of man by man has no place, and while religion is free, it is not allowed to interfere with the political and economic aspects of a nation's life. . . .

We have passed through grievous trials. We have survived them but at a terrible cost, and the legacy they have left in tortured minds and stunted souls will pursue us for a long time. Our trials are not over. Let us prepare ourselves for them in the spirit of free and disciplined men and women, stout of heart and purpose, who will not stray from the right path or forget our ideals and objectives. We have to start this work of healing and we have to build and create. The wounded body and spirit of India call upon all of us to dedicate ourselves to this great task. May we be worthy of the task and of India.[27]

6 The Light has Gone Out

Friends and comrades, the light has gone out of our lives and there is darkness everywhere. I do not know what to tell you and how to say it. Our beloved leader, Bapu as we called him, the father of the nation, is no more. Perhaps I am wrong to say that. Nevertheless, we will not see him again as we have seen him for these many years. We will not run to him for advice and seek solace from him and that is a terrible blow not to me only but to millions and millions in this country, and it is a little difficult to soften the blow by any other advice that I or anyone else can give you.

The light has gone out, I said, and yet I was wrong. For the light that shone in this country was no ordinary light. The light that has illumined this country for these many years will illumine this country for many more years and a thousand years later that light will still be seen in this country and the world will see it and it will give solace to innumerable hearts. For that light represented something more than the immediate present; it represented the living truth . . . the eternal truths, reminding us of the right path, drawing us from error, taking this ancient country to freedom.

All this has happened when there was so much more for him to do. We could never think that he was unnecessary or that he had done his task. But now, particularly, when we are faced with so many difficulties, his not being with us is a blow most terrible to bear.

A mad man has put an end to his life, for I can only call him mad who did it, and yet there has been enough of poison spread in this country during the past years and months and this poison has had effect on people's minds. We must face this poison, we must root out this poison and we must face all the perils that encompass us and face them not madly or badly but rather in the way that our beloved teacher taught us to face them. The first thing to remember now is that no one of us dare misbehave because we are angry. We have to behave like strong and determined people, determined to face all the perils that surround us, determined to carry out the mandate that our great teacher and our great leader has given us, remembering always that if, as I believe, his spirit looks upon us and sees us, nothing would displease his soul so much as to see that we have indulged in any small behaviour or any violence.

So we must not do that. But that does not mean that we should be weak but rather that we should in strength and in unity face all the troubles that are in front of us. We must hold together and all our petty troubles and difficulties and conflicts must be ended in the face of this great disaster. A great disaster is a symbol to us to remember all the big things of life and forget the small things, of which we have thought too much.

It was proposed by some friends that Mahatmaji's body should be embalmed for a few days to enable millions of people to pay their last homage to him. But it was his wish, repeatedly expressed, that no such

things should happen, that this should not be done, that he was entirely opposed to any embalming of his body.

Tomorrow should be a day of fasting and prayer for all of us. Those who live elsewhere out of Delhi and in other parts of India will no doubt also take such part as they can in this last homage. For them also let this be a day of fasting and prayer. And at the appointed time for cremation, that is 4 p.m. tomorrow afternoon, people should go to the river or to the sea and offer prayers there. And while we pray, the greatest prayer that we can offer is to take a pledge to dedicate ourselves to the truth and to the cause for which this great countryman of ours lived and for which he has died.[28]

A Glory Departed

I have a sense of utter shame both as an individual and as head of the government of India that we should have failed to protect the greatest treasure we possessed. It is our failure, as it has been our failure in the past many months, to give protection to many an innocent man, woman, and child. It may be that that burden and task was too great for us or for any government; nevertheless, it is a failure, and today the fact that this mighty person, whom we honoured and loved beyond measure, has gone because we could not give him adequate protection is shame for all of us. It is shame to me as an Indian that an Indian should have raised his hand against him, it is shame to me as a Hindu that a Hindu should have done this deed and done it to the greatest Indian of the day and the greatest Hindu of the age.

We praise people in well-chosen words and we have some kind of measure for greatness. How shall we praise him and how shall we measure him, because he was not of the common clay that all of us

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are made of? He came, lived a fairly long span of life, and has passed away. No words of praise of ours in this house are needed, for he has had greater praise in his life than any living man in history and during these two or three days since his death he has had the homage of the world. What can we add to that? How can we praise him?—how can we who have been children of his, and perhaps more intimately children of his than the children of his body, for we have all been in some greater or smaller measure the children of his spirit, unworthy as we were?

A glory has departed and the sun that warmed and brightened our lives has set and we shiver in the cold and dark. Yet he would not have us feel this way after all that glory that we saw, for all these years that man with divine fire changed us also, and, such as we are, we have been moulded by him during these years and out of that divine fire many of us also took a small spark which strengthened and made us work to some extent on the lines that he fashioned; and so if we praise him our words seem rather small and if we praise him to some extent we praise ourselves. Great men and eminent men have monuments in bronze and marble set up for them, but this man of divine fire managed in his lifetime to become enmeshed in millions and millions of hearts so that all of us have become somewhat of the stuff that he was made of, though to an infinitely lesser degree. He spread out over India, not in palaces only or in select places or in assemblies, but in every hamlet and hut of the lowly and of those who suffer. He lives in the hearts of millions and he will live for immemorial ages.

What then can we say about him except to feel humble on this occasion? To praise him we are not worthy, to praise him whom we could not follow adequately and sufficiently. It is almost doing him

an injustice just to pass him by with words when he demanded work and labour and sacrifice from us in large measure. He made this country during the last thirty years or more attain to heights of sacrifice which in that particular domain have never been equalled elsewhere. He succeeded in that, yet ultimately things happened which, no doubt, made him suffer tremendously, though his tender face never lost its smile and he never spoke a harsh word to anyone. Yet he must have suffered, suffered for the failing of this generation whom he had trained, suffered because we went away from the path that he had shown us, and ultimately the hand of a child of his—for he, after all, is as much a child of his as any other Indian—the hand of that child of his struck him down.

Long ages afterward history will judge of this period that we have passed through. It will judge of the successes and failures. We are too near to be proper judges of and understand what has happened and what has not happened. All we know is that there was glory and that it is no more. All we know is that for the moment there is darkness: not so dark certainly, because when we look into our hearts we still find the living flame which he lighted there, and if those living flames exist there will not be darkness in this land and we shall be able with our effort, praying with him and following his path, to illumine this land again, small as we are, but still with the fire that he instilled into us. He was perhaps the greatest symbol of the India of the past, and, may I say, of the India of the future, that we could have. We stand in this perilous age of the present between that past and the future to be, and we face all manner of perils, and the greatest peril is sometimes a lack of faith that comes to us, the sense of frustration that comes to us, the sinking of the heart and of the spirit that comes to us when

we see ideals go overboard, when we see the great things that we talked about somehow pass into empty words and life taking a different course. Yet I do believe that perhaps this period will pass soon enough.

Great as this man of God was in his life, he has been greater in his death, and I have no shadow of a doubt that by his death he has served the great cause as he served it throughout his life. We mourn him, we shall always mourn him, because we are human and cannot forget our valued master; but I know that he would not like us to mourn him. No tears came to his eyes when his dearest and closest went away, only the firm resolve to persevere, to serve the great cause that he had chosen. So he would chide us if we merely mourn. That is a poor way of doing homage to him. The only way is to express our determination, to pledge ourselves anew, to conduct ourselves so and to dedicate ourselves to the great task which he undertook and which he accomplished to such a large extent. So we have to work, we have to labour, we have to sacrifice, and thus prove to some extent at least worthy followers of his. . . .

This happening, this tragedy, is not merely the isolated act of a mad man. It comes out of a certain atmosphere of violence and hatred that has prevailed in this country for many months and years, and more especially in the past few months. That atmosphere envelops us and surrounds us, and if we are to serve the cause he put before us we have to face this atmosphere, to combat it, struggle against it, and root out the evil of hatred and violence. So far as this government is concerned I trust they will spare no means, spare no effort to tackle it, because if we do not do that, if we in our weakness or for any other reason that we may consider adequate do not take effective means to stop this violence, to stop this spreading of hatred by word of mouth or

writing or act, then, indeed, we are not worthy of being in this government, we are not certainly worthy of being his followers, and we are not worthy of even saying words of praise for this great soul who has departed. So that on this occasion or any other when we think of this great master who has gone, let us always think of him in terms of work and labour and sacrifice, in terms of fighting evil wherever we see it, in terms of holding to the truth, as he put it before us, and if we do so, however unworthy we may be, we shall at least have done our duty and paid the proper homage to his spirit.

He has gone, and all over India there is a feeling of having been left desolate and forlorn. All of us sense that feeling and I do not know when we shall be able to get rid of it. And yet, together with that feeling, there is also a feeling of proud thanksgiving that it has been given to us of this generation to be associated with this mighty person. In the ages to come, centuries and maybe millenniums after us, people will think of this generation when this man of God trod the earth and will think of us who, however small, could also follow his path and probably tread on that holy ground where his feet had been. Let us be worthy of him, let us always be so.[29]

Bapu

Nineteen-sixteen. Over thirty-two years ago. That was when I first saw Bapu, and an age has gone by since then. Inevitably one looks back and memories crowd in.

What a strange period this has been in India's history and the story, with all its ups and downs and triumphs and defeats, has the quality of a ballad and a romance. Even our trivial lives were touched by a halo of romance, because we lived through this period and

were actors, in greater or lesser degree, in the great drama of India.

This period has been full of wars and upheavals and stirring events all over the world. Yet events in India stand out in distinctive outline because they were on an entirely different plane. If a person studied this period without knowing much of Bapu, he would wonder how and why all this happened in India. It is difficult to explain it; it is even difficult to understand by the cold light of reason why each one of us behaved as he or she did. It sometimes happens that an individual or even a nation is swept away by some gust of emotion or feeling into a particular type of action, sometimes noble action, more often ignoble action. But that passion and feeling pass and the individual soon returns to his normal levels of action and inaction.

The surprising thing about India during this period was not only that the country as a whole functioned on a high plane, but also that it functioned more or less continuously for a lengthy period on that plane. That indeed was a remarkable achievement. It cannot easily be explained or understood unless one looks upon the astonishing personality that moulded this period. Like a colossus he stands astride half a century of India's history, a colossus not of the body but of the mind and spirit.

We mourn for Bapu and feel orphaned. Looking back at his magnificent life, what is there to mourn for? Surely to very very few human beings in history could it have been given to find so much fulfilment in their own lives. He was sad for our failures and unhappy at not having raised India to greater heights. That sadness and unhappiness are easy to understand. Yet who dares say that his life was a failure? Whatever he touched he turned into something worth while and precious. Whatver he did yielded substantial results, though per-

haps not as great as he hoped for. One carried away the impression that he could not really fail in anything that he attempted. According to the teachings of the Gita, he laboured dispassionately without attachment to results, and so results came to him.

During his long life, full of hard work and activity and novel adventures out of the common rut, there is hardly any jarring note anywhere. All his manifold activities became progressively a symphony and every word he spoke and every gesture that he made fitted into this, and so unconsciously he became the perfect artist, for he had learned the art of living, though the way of life he had adopted was very different from the world's way. It became apparent that the pursuit of truth and goodness leads among other things to this artistry in life.

As he grew older his body seemed to be just a vehicle for the mighty spirit within him. Almost one forgot the body as one listened to him or looked at him, and so where he sat became a temple and where he trod was hallowed ground.

Even in his death there was a magnificence and complete artistry. It was from every point of view a fitting climax to the man and to the life he had lived. Indeed it heightened the lesson of his life. He died in the fullness of his powers and as he would no doubt have liked to die, at the moment of prayer. He died a martyr to the cause of unity to which he had always been devoted and for which he had worked unceasingly, more especially during the past year or more. He died suddenly as all men should wish to die. There was no fading away of the body or a long illness or the forgetfulness of the mind that comes with age. Why then should we grieve for him? Our memories of him will be of the Master, whose step was light to the end, whose smile was

infectious, and whose eyes were full of laughter. We shall associate no failing powers with him of body or mind. He lived and he died at the top of his strength and powers, leaving a picture in our minds and in the mind of the age that we live in that can never fade away.

That picture will not fade. But he did something much more than that, for he entered into the very stuff of our minds and spirits and changed them and moulded them. The Gandhi generation will pass away, but that stuff will remain and will affect each succeeding generation, for it has become a part of India's spirit. Just when we were growing poor in spirit in this country, Bapu came to enrich us and make us strong, and the strength he gave us was not for a moment or a day or a year but it was something added on to our national inheritance.

Bapu has done a giant's work for India and the world and even for our poor selves, and he has done it astonishingly well. And now it is our turn not to fail him or his memory but to carry on the work to the best of our ability and to fulfil the pledges we have so often taken.[30]

Two Weeks After

Two weeks have passed since India and the world learned that tragedy which will shame India for ages to come, two weeks of sorrow and searching heart and strong dormant emotions rising in floods of tears from millions of eyes. Would that those tears washed away our weakness and littleness and made us a little worthy of the master for whom we sorrowed.

Two weeks of homage and tribute from every corner of the globe, from kings and potentates and those in high authority, to the common

man everywhere who instinctively looked to him as a friend, a comrade, and a champion.

The flood of emotion will tone down gradually as all such emotions do, though none of us can ever be the same as we were before, for he has entered into the very texture of our lives and minds.

People talk of memorials to him in statues of bronze or marble or pillars, and thus they mock him and belie his message. What tribute shall we pay him that he would have appreciated? He has shown us the way to live and the way to die, and if we have not understood that lesson, it would be better we raised no memorial to him, for the only fit memorial is to follow reverently in the path he showed us and do our duty in life and in death.

He was a Hindu and an Indian and the greatest in many generations, and he was proud of being a Hindu and an Indian. To him India was dear because she had represented throughout the ages certain immutable truths. But though he was intensely religious and came to be called the Father of the Nation which he had liberated, yet no narrow religious or national bonds confined his spirit. And so he became a great internationalist, believing in the essential unity of man, the underlying unity of all religions and needs of humanity, and more specifically devoting himself to the service of the poor distressed and oppressed millions everywhere.

His death brought more tributes than have ever been paid at the passing away of any other human being in history. Perhaps what would have pleased him best was the spontaneous tributes that came from the people of Pakistan. On the morrow of the tragedy all of us forgot for a while the bitterness that had crept in and the estrangement and conflict of these past months, and Gandhiji stood out as the

beloved champion and leader of the people of India as it was before partition cut up this living nation.

What was the great power over the mind and heart of man due to? Ages to come will judge and we are too near him to assess the many facets and his extraordinarily rich personality. But even we realize that his dominating passion was truth. That truth led him to proclaim without ceasing that good ends can never be attained by evil methods, that the end itself is distorted if the method pursued is bad. That truth led him to confess publicly whenever he thought he had made a mistake—Himalayan errors, he called some of his own mistakes. That truth led him to fight evil and untruth wherever he found them regardless of consequences. That truth made service of the poor and dispossessed the passion of his life, for where there is inequality and discrimination and suppression there is injustice and evil and untruth. And thus he became beloved by all those who have suffered from social and political evils, and a great representative of humanity as it should be.

His physical body has left us and we shall never see him again or hear his gentle voice or run to him for counsel. But his imperishable memory and immortal message remain with us. How can we honour them and live up to them?

He was a great unifier in India who taught us not only bare tolerance of others but the willing acceptance of them as our friends and comrades in common undertakings. He taught us to rise above our little selves and prejudices and to see good in others. His last few months and his very death symbolize to us this message of large-hearted tolerance and unity. A little while before he died we pledged ourselves in this before him. We must keep that pledge and remem-

ber that India is a common home to all those who live here, to whatever religion they may belong. They are equal sharers in our great inheritance and they have equal rights and obligations. Ours is a composite nation as all great nations must necessarily be. Any narrowness in outlook, any attempt to confine the bounds of this great nation, will be a betrayal to his final lesson to us and will surely lead to disaster and loss of that freedom for which he laboured and which he gained for us in a large measure.

Equally important is the service of the common man in India, who has suffered so much in the past. His claims must be paramount and everything that comes in the way of his betterment must have second place. Not merely from moral and humanitarian grounds but also from the viewpoint of political common sense, it has become essential to raise the standards of the common man and give him full opportunity to progress.[31]

*The Immersion of the Ashes**

The last journey has ended. The final pilgrimage has been made. For over fifty years Mahatma Gandhi wandered about all over our great country, from the Himalayas and the North Western Frontier and the Brahmaputra in the North East to Kanya Kumari in the far South. He visited every part and corner of this country, not as a mere tourist or visitor for the sake of amusement, but in order

*On the morning of February 12, 1948, Gandhiji's ashes were carried in a mighty procession to the river bank, transferred to a boat, and taken to the place where the waters of the Ganges and Jamna rivers actually meet, where they were immersed. After the immersion ceremony, Jawaharlal Nehru addressed the great gathering, estimated at over a million people, assembled on the river bank. He spoke extempore in Hindustani, and this translation has been made from the recorded notes.

to understand and serve the Indian people. Perhaps no other Indian in history has travelled about so much in India or got to know the common people so well and served them so abundantly. And now his journey in this world is over, though we have still to continue for a while. Many people are moved to grief, and this is proper and natural. But why should we grieve? Do we grieve for him or for something else? In his life as in his death there has been a radiance which will illumine our country for ages to come. Why then should we grieve for him? Let us grieve rather for ourselves, for our own weaknesses, for the illwill in our hearts, for our dissensions and for our conflicts. Remember that it was to remove all these that Mahatmaji gave his life. Remember that during the past few months it was on this that he concentrated his vast energy and service. If we honour him, do we honour his name only or do we honour what he stood for, his advice and teachings, and more specially what he died for?

Let us, standing here on the banks of the Ganges, search our own hearts and ask ourselves the question: How far have we followed the path shown to us by Gandhiji and how far have we tried to live in peace and co-operation with others? If even now we follow the right path, it will be well with us and well with our country.

Our country gave birth to a mighty one and he shone like a beacon not only for India but for the whole world. And yet he was done to death by one of our own brothers and compatriots. How did this happen? You might think that it was an act of madness, but that does not explain this tragedy. It could only occur because the seed for it was sown in the poison of hatred and enmity that spread throughout the country and affected so many of our people. Out of that seed grew this poisonous plant. It is the duty of all of us to fight

this poison of hatred and illwill. If we have learned anything from Gandhiji, we must bear no illwill or enmity towards any person. The individual is not our enemy. It is the poison within him that we fight and which we must put an end to. We are weak and feeble, but Gandhiji's strength passed to us also to some extent. In his reflected glory we also gained in stature. The splendour and the strength were his and the path he showed was also his. We stumbled often enough and fell down in our attempts to follow that path and serve our people as he wanted us to serve them.

Our pillar of strength is no more. But why do we say that? His image is enshrined in the hearts of the million men and women who are present here today, and hundreds of millions of our countrymen, who are not present here, will also never forget him. Future generations of our people, who have not seen him or heard him, will also have that image in their hearts because that image is now a part of India's inheritance and history. Thirty or forty years ago began in India what is called the Gandhi Age. It has come to an end today. And yet I am wrong, for it has not ended. Perhaps it has really begun now, although somewhat differently. Thus far we have been leaning on him for advice and support, from now onwards we have to stand on our own feet and to rely on ourselves. May his memory inspire us and his teachings light our path. Remember his ever-recurring message: "Root out fear from your hearts and malice, put an end to violence and internecine conflict, keep your country free."

He brought us to freedom and the world marvelled at the way he did it. But at the very moment of gaining our freedom we forgot the lesson of the Master. A wave of frenzy and fanaticism overtook our people and we disgraced the fair name of India. Many of our youth

were misled and took to wrong paths. Are we to drive them away and crush them? They are our own people and we have to win them over and mould them and train them to right thought and action.

The communal poison, which has brought disaster upon us, will put an end to our freedom also if we are not vigilant and if we do not take action in time. It was to awaken us to this impending danger that Gandhiji undertook his last fast two or three weeks ago. His self-crucifixion roused the nation's conscience and we pledged before him to behave better. It was only then that he broke his fast.

Gandhiji used to observe silence for one day in every week. Now that voice is silenced forever and there is unending silence. And yet that voice resounds in our ears and in our hearts, and it will resound in the minds and hearts of our people, and even beyond the borders of India, in the long ages to come. For that voice is the voice of truth, and though truth may occasionally be suppressed it can never be put down. Violence for him was the opposite of truth and therefore he preached to us against violence not only of the hand but of the mind and heart. If we do not give up this internecine violence and have the utmost forbearance and friendliness to others, we are doomed as a nation. The path of violence is perilous and freedom seldom exists for long where there is violence. Our talk of Swarajya and the people's freedom is meaningless, if we have internal violence and conflict.

I see large numbers of soldiers of the Indian Army in this audience. It is their proud privilege and duty to defend the integrity and honour of this country of ours. They can only do so if they stand together and function together. If they fell out among themselves, what would their strength be worth and how could they then serve their country?

Democracy demands discipline, tolerance and mutual regard. Freedom demands respect for the freedom of others. In a democracy changes are made by mutual discussion and persuasion and not by violent means. If a government has not got popular support, another government takes its place which commands that popular support. It is only small groups, who know that they cannot get sufficient popular support, that resort to methods of violence, imagining in their folly that they can gain their ends in this way. This is not only utterly wrong but it is also utterly foolish. For the reaction to the violence of the minority, which seeks to coerce the majority, is to provoke the majority into violence against them.

This great tragedy has happened because many persons, including some in high places, have poisoned the atmosphere of this country of ours. It is the duty of the government as well as the people to root out this poison. We have had our lesson at a terrible cost. Is there anyone among us now who will not pledge himself after Gandhiji's death to fulfil his mission—a mission for which the greatest man of our country, the greatest man in the world, has laid down his life?

You and I and all of us will go back from these sands of our noble river, the Ganges. We shall feel sad and lonely. We shall never see Gandhiji again. We used to run to him for advice and guidance whenever we were confronted with any great problem or when we felt ill at ease or in doubt. There is none to advise us now or to share our burdens. It is not I alone or a few of us who looked up to him for help. Thousands and hundreds of thousands of our countrymen considered him as their intimate friend and counsellor. All of us felt as if we were his children. Rightly he was called the Father of our Nation

and in millions of homes today there is mourning as on the passing away of a beloved father.

We shall go away from this river bank sad and lonely. But we shall also think with pride of the high and unique privilege that has been ours to have had for our chief and leader and friend this mighty person, who carried us to great heights on the way to freedom and truth. And the way of struggle that he taught us was also the way of truth. Remember also that the path he showed us was one of fighting for the good and against evil and not the way of sitting quietly on the peaks of the Himalayas. And so we have to fight on and not seek escape or rest. We have to do our duty and fulfil the pledges we have given him. Let us tread the path of truth and Dharma. Let us make India a great country in which goodwill and harmony prevail and every man and woman, irrespective of faith and belief, can live in dignity and freedom.

How often we have shouted "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai." By shouting this slogan we thought we had done our duty. Gandhiji always felt pained to hear this shouting, for he knew what little it meant and how often it just took the place of action or even of thought. "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai"—"Victory to Mahatma Gandhi," what victory could we wish him or give him? He was the Victorious One in life and in death. It is you and I and this unfortunate country that have to struggle for victory.

Throughout his life he thought of India in terms of the poor and the oppressed and the downtrodden. To raise them and free them was the mission of his life. He adopted their ways of life and dress so that none in the country may feel lowly. Victory to him was the growth of freedom of these people.

What kind of triumph did Gandhiji wish for us? Not the triumph for which most people and countries strive through violence, fraud, treachery and evil means. That kind of victory is not stable. For the foundations of a lasting victory can only be laid on the rock of truth. Gandhiji gave us a new method of struggle and political warfare and a new kind of diplomacy. He demonstrated the efficacy of truth and goodwill and non-violence in politics. He taught us to respect and co-operate with every Indian as a man and as a fellow-citizen, irrespective of his political belief or religious creed. We all belong to Mother India and have to live and die here. We all are equal partners in the freedom that we have won. Everyone of our three or four hundred million people must have an equal right to the opportunities and blessings that free India has to offer. It was not for a few privileged persons that Gandhiji strove for and died for. We have to strive for the same ideal and in the same way. Then only shall we be worthy to say "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai."

Gandhiji at Ramdhun by Nandalal Bose

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